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ROMANTICISM AND THE ORIENT

by Irving Babbitt

THE special danger of the present time is an increasing material contact between national and racial groups that remain spiritually alien. The chief obstacle to a better understanding between East and West in particular is a certain type of occidental who is wont to assume almost unconsciously that the East has everything to learn from the West and little or nothing to give in return. One may distinguish three main forms of this assumption of superiority on the part of the occidental: first, the assumption of racial superiority, an almost mystical faith in the pre-eminent virtues of the white peoples (especially Nordic blonds) as compared with the brown or yellow races; second, the assumption of superiority based on the achievements of physical science and the type of "progress" it has promoted, a tendency to regard as a general inferiority the inferiority of the oriental in material efficiency; third, the assumption of religious superiority, the tendency, less marked now than formerly, to dismiss non-Christian Asiatics *en masse* as "heathen", or else to recognize value in their religious beliefs, only in so far as they conform to the pattern set by Christianity. Asiatics for their part are ready enough to turn to account the discoveries of Western science, but they are even less disposed than they were before the Great War to admit the moral superiority of the West. A certain revulsion of feeling seems to be taking place even in Japan which has gone farther than any other oriental land in its borrowings from the Occident.

On any comprehensive view, indeed, Asiatics, so far from having a mean estimate of themselves, have had their own conceit of superiority, not only with reference to occidentals but with reference to one another. Many Hindus have held in the past, some no doubt still hold, that true spirituality has never appeared in the world save on the sacred soil of India. No country, again, not even ancient Greece, has been more firmly convinced than China that it alone was civilized. A statesman of the Tang period addressed to the throne a memorial against Buddhism which begins as follows: "This

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Buddha was a barbarian". One of the traditional names of China "All-under-Heaven" (Poo-Tien-shia) is itself sufficiently eloquent.

In general Asia offers cultural groups so widely divergent that one may ask if there is not something artificial in any attempt to contrast an Asiatic with a European or Western point of view. An attempt of this kind was made at Paris a few years ago in the form of a symposium (*Les Appels de l'Orient*) to which about one hundred and forty French and foreign writers and scholars contributed. According to one of these contributors, M. Sylvain Lévi, professor of Sanscrit at the Collège de France, it is absurd to bring together under one label "a Syrian of Beyrut, an Iranian of Persia, a Brahmin of Benares, a pariah of the Deccan, a merchant of Canton, a mandarin of Peking, a lama of Thibet, a yakut of Siberia, a daimio of Japan, a cannibal of Sumatra, etc." One may indeed affirm almost anything of Asia in general compared with the Occident in general. One may even, like Dr. Frederic Ives Carpenter in his recent volume, *Emerson and Asia* (Harvard University Press, 1930), discover an oriental element in the dramas of Eugene O'Neill!

The question of East *versus* West may, nevertheless, turn out to have a very weighty meaning if properly defined and limited. Several contributors to the Paris symposium show some inkling of what this meaning is. They are helped to their sense of the contrast between Europe and Asia by another continental contrast—that between Europe and America; and here they are in substantial agreement. America stands for the purely industrial and utilitarian view of life, the cult of power and machinery and material comfort. It is in order to escape from this baleful excess of Americanism that Europe is inclined to turn towards the East. "Europe", we read in the symposium, "is, as a result of her almost mortal sufferings of recent years, ready to bow her head and humble herself. It will then be possible for oriental influences to make themselves felt. An immense continent will remain the refuge and the fortress of the occidental spirit: the whole of America will harden herself and proudly close her mind, whereas Europe will heed the lesson of the Orient." One may perhaps sum up the sense of passages of this kind by saying that in its pursuit of the truths of the natural order Europe has come to neglect the truths of humility—the truths of the inner life. In the literal sense of the word, it has lost its orientation, for it originally received those truths from the Orient (*Lux ex Oriente*). One remembers Matthew Arnold's account of this former contact between East and West; first, the impact of a Europe drunk with power upon Asia:

> The East bowed low before the blast
> In patient, deep disdain;
> She let the legions thunder past,
> And plunged in thought again.

And finally the heeding of the voice of the East, in other words the acceptance of the truths of the inner life in their Christian form, by a Europe that had grown weary of her own materialism:

> She heard it, the victorious West,
> In sword and crown arrayed,
> She felt the void that mined her breast,
> She shivered and obeyed.

The problems that arise today in connection with the relations of East and West are far more complex than they were in Graeco-Roman times. The East now means not merely the Near East, but even more the Far East. Moreover, the East, both Near and Far, is showing itself less inclined than formerly to bow before the imperialistic aggression of the Occident "in patient, deep disdain". On

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the contrary, a type of nationalistic self-assertion is beginning to appear in various oriental lands that is only too familiar to us in the West. Japan in particular has been disposing of her Buddhas as curios and going in for battleships. The lust of domination, which is almost the ultimate fact of human nature, has been so armed in the Occident with the machinery of scientific efficiency that the Orient seems to have no alternative save to become efficient in the same way or be reduced to economic and political vassalage. This alternative has been pressing with special acuteness on China, the pivotal country of the Far East. Under the impact of the West an ethos that has endured for thousands of years has been crumbling amid a growing spiritual bewilderment. In short, the Orient itself is losing its orientation.

The essence of this orientation, as I have already suggested, may be taken to be the affirmation in the religious form of the truths of the inner life. Our interpretation of this religious side of the East has often been unduly coloured during the past century or more by romanticism. I am especially struck by this romantic misinterpretation in the case of the Orient of which I have made some first-hand study, namely ancient India, more particularly Buddhist India. The matter is of some consequence, if it be true, as I am inclined to think, that Buddha is the ultimate Oriental.

I

I take up first the more superficial aspects of romantic orientalism. What interests the romantic in the East as elsewhere is the picturesque surfaces of life rather than its constant elements. This pursuit of local colour is what one finds in the volumes of the early romantics dealing with the East—for example, in *Les Orientales* of Victor Hugo. It is the Orient, says Professor W. F. Giese of this latter work, seen from Les Batignolles: "turbaned Turks, piratical Greeks, lovely odalisks, glittering scimitars, comparadjis, spahis, timariots, bloody janissaries, black eunuchs, scented harems, azure seas with women in sacks splashing into them from the windows of marble palaces, wars, murders, massacres—and pictures". Nowadays anyone with a thirst for the exotic can satisfy it in a more authentic form by taking a world cruise or at the very least by turning the pages of the magazine *Asia*.

A more important romantic trait for our subject is the desire to escape from an unpalatable present into some land of heart's desire. The romantic not infrequently places the bower of dreams into which he flees from the here and now in the Orient. Here is an extreme example from the Paris symposium. "As for me," says Mme Alice Louis-Barthou, "it is very simple. I look upon the Occident with abomination. It represents for me fog, grayness, chill, machinery, murderous science, factories with all the vices, the triumph of noise, of hustling, of ugliness. . . . The Orient is calm, peace, beauty, colour, mystery, charm, sunlight, joy, ease of life and revery; in fine the exact opposite of our hateful and grotesque civilization. I am reactionary, retrograde and antediluvian as much as one can be. So you must not ask my opinion on these matters. If I had my way, I should have a Chinese Wall built between the Orient and the Occident to keep the latter from poisoning the former; I should have the heads of all the giaours cut off, and I should go and live where you can see clearly and where there are no Europeans. *Voilà*!"

The romantic quality of imagination that appears in such passages has been combined since Rousseau with the cult of a subrational spontaneity. This Rousseauistic romanticism

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is precisely the type one finds in the Schlegels who actually founded the romantic school in Germany (1798-1800) and were at the same time pioneers in interpreting India to the West. The ultimate richness of the romantic imagination, said Friedrich Schlegel, will be found in India. The influence of his *Language and Wisdom of the Hindus* (1808) was far-reaching. The primitivistic colouring that the whole subject took about this time can be traced in the philosophy of Schopenhauer who looked upon himself as a disciple of the Hindus. One of the most remarkable achievements of Schopenhauer and other primitivists is to have converted Buddha, in reality one of the most alert and vigorous figures of whom we have historical record, and withal one of the most cheerful, into a heavy-eyed, pessimistic dreamer. The Rousseauism that appears in the novels of Tolstoy and other Russians has been frequently put under the patronage of this subrational Buddha. "Under different names and figures", says the Vicomte de Vogüé, "every Russian writer is going to hold up for our admiration this vegetative form of existence. The last word of human wisdom is the sanctification, the apotheosis of the elementary brute, conceived as good and vaguely fraternal." The final source of this cult of the simple life, M. de Vogüé goes on to say, is the "gospel of Buddha".*

This primitivistic type of romanticism appears also in the poems of Leconte de Lisle from whom many Frenchmen get their notions of India. Leconte de Lisle combines a superlative sense for the picturesque surfaces of life with an extreme nostalgia, and all without the perception of any unity behind the illusory veil of the senses (*Māyā*), a perception that in genuine Hindu philosophy is almost an obsession. Americans are supposed to be incapable of grasping the true spirit of the East. Yet I venture to affirm without fear of being contradicted by those who have a first-hand knowledge of the documents that Emerson has put more of India into his *Brahma* than Leconte de Lisle into poems like *Bhagavat* and *Çunacépa*.

* Vogüé: *Le Roman russe*, p. 312.

II

Probably most of us get our ideas of India not from German or French sources but from a living English romanticist, Rudyard Kipling. Kipling shows the usual romantic interest in the primitive and the subrational; only he is less inclined than the earlier primitivists to see in the instinctive the source of pity and more inclined to see in it the source of strength whether in the individual or the race. In this aspect he may indeed be defined as a romantic imperialist. If I were attempting a complete estimate of Kipling, I should have to add that he combines this imperialism in a way in which only an Englishman can combine incompatibles with an Hebraic sense of righteousness. Kipling has an eye for vivid and picturesque contrasts, especially the racial contrasts that arise in the Anglo-Indian East, with a corresponding weakness in rendering what is normal and representative in human nature. His poetry also supplies examples of nostalgia. When in England Kipling (at least the poetical Kipling) longs to be in India; when in India he longs to be in England. One is reminded at times of the old song:

> Oh, that I were where I would be
> Then would I be where I am not;
> Here am I where I must be,
> Where I would be I cannot.

One may cite *In Springtime* as an example of a poem in which he blends happily the two main romantic motifs of nostalgia and local colour:

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My garden blazes brightly with the rosebush and the peach,
And the *koïl* sings above it, in the *siris* by the well.
From the creeper-covered trellis comes the squirrel's chattering speech,
And the blue-jay screams and flutters where the cheery *sat-bhai* dwell,
But the rose has lost its fragrance, and the *koïl's* note is strange;
I am sick of endless sunshine, sick of blossom-burdened bough.
Give me back the leafless woodlands where the winds of springtime range—
Give me back one day in England, for it's spring in England now!

An even more familiar example of nostalgia in Kipling, an example almost too familiar to quote, is *Mandalay*, a poem in which he has celebrated the longing of the British private for a "neater, sweeter maiden, in a cleaner, greener land". The essential passage, it will be remembered, is the following:

Ship me somewheres east of Suez where the best is like the worst,
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments, an' a man can raise a thirst;
For the temple bells are callin', an' it's there that I would be—
By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' lazy at the sea—

If the temple bells are calling the British private to "raise a thirst", to what, one may inquire, are they calling the native Burman? Surely not to be "lazy" and irresponsible. Kipling himself would no doubt warn us against pursuing any such unprofitable inquiry, in virtue of the principle that "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet". The fact is that they are meeting more and more, with the attendant danger that this meeting will be only on the material level. Kipling's line is rightfully resented by Orientals: it is true about in the sense that John is John and James is James and never the twain shall meet, or, if there is any difference between the two statements, it is one of degree and not of kind.

If we refuse then to admit that the point of view of Buddhist Burma is necessarily unintelligible to us and turn for information to the authentic documents of the faith, what we find is that a central admonition of Buddha may be summed up in the words: Do not raise a thirst. As to what goes on in Burma today, nothing is more enlightening than the type of education given to the children of the country by the members of the Buddhist Order. This education consists largely in the memorizing of certain sacred texts. One of the passages especially favoured for this purpose, we learn from a recent book on Burma, is Buddha's discussion of the nature of true blessedness, which runs in part as follows:

To wait on mother and father, to cherish child and wife and follow a quiet calling, this is true blessedness.

To give alms, to live religiously, to protect relatives, to perform blameless deeds, this is true blessedness.

To cease from sin, to refrain from intoxicating drinks, to persevere in right conduct, this is true blessedness.

Reverence and humility, contentment and gratitude, the hearing of the Law of righteousness at fitting moments, this is true blessedness.

Penance and chastity, discernment of the noble truths and the realization of peace, this is true blessedness.

The author of the book on Burma proffers the further information that, as a result of memorizing such verses, the children acquire "boundless charity and rigid self-control"—a statement one is inclined to receive with some scepticism. Like Kipling, though in an entirely different way, he is probably substitut-

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ing an idyllic for the real Burma. If only a fraction of what he says is true, we should seek to divert the attention of our own children from radios and motion pictures and set them to memorizing Buddhist verses!

III

The idea that more than any other may be said to have dominated India from remote antiquity is that of yoga (related etymologically to Latin *jugum*, our "yoke"). Buddha himself has been called the great yogi. Yoga, or the art of "yoking" oneself, implies a special form of effort put forth in meditation—spiritual strenuousness, as one may say. Asoka, the Buddhist ruler of India (third century B.C.), though a man of action in every sense, had primarily this form of strenuousness in mind when he had carved on rocks and pillars at various points throughout his vast empire exhortations like the following: "Let all joy be in effort". "Let small and great exert themselves". In thus admonishing his subjects he aimed to promote, not merely a humanistic wisdom, but saintliness. There are to be sure saints and saints. A few years ago the London papers printed the following dispatch from India: "A new saint has appeared in the Swāt Valley. The police are after him". But Asoka's idea of the saint was not so very different from that of the Christian. The virtues he recommended are practically identical, as I have pointed out elsewhere, with the "fruits of the spirit" enumerated by Saint Paul: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control".

It follows from all I have said that the essential confusion against which one needs to be on one's guard is that between the quality of will put forth by the oriental in meditation and the pantheistic revery of the primitivist. In his *Defense of the West*, a protest against every form of oriental influence, M. Henri Massis inquires: "Can there not be found in Bergsonism an attitude analogous to that of the Hindu yogis?" Most emphatically no, I should reply. Yoga, if genuine, is at the opposite pole from the *élan vital* of Bergson. On the other hand, M. Massis is justified in discovering a primitivistic element in Rabindranath Tagore, who, he says, "denounces the misdeeds of the machinery and technique of the West in the same tone in which Rousseau condemned the corruption of Athens, the decadence of Rome, and the humanism of the Renaissance, in order to exalt the Scythians, the early Persians and the Germans of Tacitus". Tagore has genuinely oriental traits, but in his total outlook on life he reminds one less of the ancient sages of his race than of Shelley or even of Maurice Maeterlinck. In short, he must be judged primarily as a romantic poet and as such he has real merits, especially, I am told, in his native Bengali. Is Gandhi again a true Mahatma in the traditional Hindu sense or is he rather a Tolstoyan utopist? There is room here for hesitation. It must be admitted that Gandhi reminds one in some respects of the traditional Mahatma, but the side of his character and influence that relates him to Tolstoy and ultimately to Rousseau* would seem to be the more significant. Like Tolstoy he indulges in an especially vicious confusion between the things of God and the things of Caesar, a confusion that is no more Buddhist than it is Christian. Buddha once rebuked a group of his followers for even talking about politics. Gandhi

* This filiation has been traced by Milan I. Markovitch in two volumes: *Rousseau et Tolstoï* and *Tolstoï et Gandhi* (1929). Apropos of these volumes, A. Foucher, professor of Sanscrit at the Sorbonne, wrote me as follows: "It results from this investigation, based on the documents, that our friend Jean-Jacques has infected even India, and that, in the present conflict between East and West, it is after all the West which has supplied the rods with which it is being beaten".

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would appear to be most utopian in his assumption that his particular mixture of religion and political agitation is compatible with a program of "non-violence". One can well understand his horror when he was confronted with the practical outcome of his own dream in the bloody rioting at Bombay in 1921.* According to André Siegfried, Europe, appalled by the American excess of standardization and mass production, is tempted to turn from Henry Ford to Gandhi. Before making any such choice, Europe would do well to be less one-sided in its view of America, and also less naïve and uncritical in its notion of what is genuinely oriental in the Orient.

The whole subject is as a matter of fact full of pitfalls. Not only has Rousseauistic romanticism had an important influence in the East but the Orient has had a primitivistic movement of its own deriving from Lao-tze, Chuang-tze and the early Chinese Taoists. Taoism, if we are to believe M. Massis, has made since the War a strong appeal to German intellectual youth. The main cultural trends of the Far East will be found to go back either to the primtivistic Lao-tze or the humanistic Confucius or the religious Buddha. In tracing these trends one needs to join the utmost keenness of discrimination to fulness of historical knowledge. For not only has each of the three doctrines gone through various phases in itself but there have been overlappings. In the case of Buddhism, for example, the Great Vehicle (*Mahāyāna*) is not to be judged in the same way as the Small Vehicle (*Hīnayāna*). One needs, furthermore, to distinguish between different branches of Mahāyāna. Take for instance the Zen Buddhism still flourishing in Japan. It is supposed to be close to the genuine teaching of Buddha because the very word Zen implies that it is "meditative".* But Zen seems to me (perhaps erroneously) to have in it a strong Taoist infusion. Practically this means that the Zenist is more pantheistic and less dualistic in his meditation, or what amounts to the same thing, less spiritually strenuous than the true Buddhist. What is involved at bottom is the problem of the higher will, a will that is felt in relation to man's ordinary expansive self as a will to refrain, and finally as a will to renounce. The fruit of this renunciation is peace. The various "return to Nature" movements in both East and West have been more or less at the expense of this quality of will. The issue is raised in an especially acute form by the early Chinese Taoists—by Chuang-tze† perhaps even more than by Lao-tze himself. They were for getting rid of action in favour of sheer inaction (*Wu Wei*). According to Professor Kuang-ti Mei of the Chinese Department at Harvard, "to the civilized principles of benevolence, righteousness, decorum, knowledge and loyalty, the Taoists oppose, like all other primitivists, heart, nature, natural goodness, instinct, inaction, silence, unconsciousness, etc. These are the incantations whereby they seek to conjure up their lost Arcadia". It must be granted that oriental primitivists have, like Wordsworth and other apostles of a "wise passiveness" in the Occident, produced art and literature of no mean merit. The question may nevertheless be raised—I have indeed heard it raised by Chinese themselves—whether Wu Wei has not had a debilitating effect on Chinese character even to the present day.

That the opposite of outer action is not in-

* See *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas* by C. F. Andrews (Macmillan, 1930), p. 276.

* Zen is the Chan Buddhism of China; the word derives ultimately from Sanscrit *Dhyāna* (meditation).

† See the article *Chuang-tze as a Romantic* by Ping-ho Kuo, in the *Sewanee Review* (July, 1931).

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action but inner action is affirmed in what we have reason to think a very ancient and authentic passage of the Buddhist scriptures. On one occasion Buddha asked alms of a rich Brahmin farmer near Benares (the work of the farmer has been throughout the ages the typical form of outer action). This particular farmer seems to have held a view of mendicant friars similar to Voltaire's—namely, that they had made a vow to God to live at our expense. "I," he said to Buddha, "having ploughed and sowed, eat. You, on the other hand, propose to eat without ploughing and sowing." Whereupon the Exalted One replied that he was engaged in an even more important tillage of the spirit. "Faith is the seed, penance the rain, understanding my yoke and plough, modesty the pole of the plough, mind the tie, thoughtfulness my ploughshare and goad. . . . Exertion is my beast of burden carrying me without turning back to the place where, having gone, one does not grieve.—So this ploughing is ploughed; it bears the fruit of immortality."

IV

"Emerson's energetic protests against the Buddhists", says M. Denis Saurat in a review of the volume by Dr. Carpenter to which I have already alluded, "seem to show that, when he understood the real meaning of Indian thought, he rejected it violently, as any normal European or American does." It is true that the "normal European or American" will not hear of renunciation in its Buddhist form. It is not clear that he is any more ready to accept it in its Christian form. A remarkable feature of the modern man indeed is that he does not propose to renounce anything and at the same time hopes to achieve the peace and brotherhood that are, according to a Buddha or a Christ, to be achieved only be renunciation. If these great religious teachers should turn out to be right, it follows that what one finds when one penetrates beneath the surface of our contemporary life is a monstrous huddle of incompatible desires.

The idea of inner action is not merely religious; it is also humanistic. It is at the basis of true mediation as well as of true meditation. It cannot be gainsaid that in its religious form inner action has had its chief representatives in Asia. There has been reason in the past, at least, for speaking of the *meditative* East. So far from being meditative, we of the West cannot apparently even grasp the idea of meditation. Papini, for example, the author of a life of Christ, discovers the true counterpoise to what he terms the "exhausting mercantile superstition of our day" in the Wu Wei of the early Taoists, which he proceeds to equate, not only with the teaching of Rousseau, but with "Christian superwisdom". Papini evidently supposes that when Christ preferred the wisdom of Mary to that of Martha it was because Mary was loafing and inviting her soul. At the opposite extreme one finds Mr. Bruce Barton's *The Man Nobody Knows*. Mr. Barton tends to present Christ as a precursor of the modern man of business, an apostle of outer action, and even as a go-getter.

The elimination of what one may term the oriental element from Christianity is to be sure nothing new. Dante speaks of the wisdom that a man may win by sitting in quiet recollection. But long before Dante this genuinely religious attitude had been giving way to the crusading spirit. The interpretation of God's will at the Council of Clermont (A.D. 1095) in terms not of inner but of outer action—in this case as a behest to go forth and slaughter Saracens—marks the beginning of a major revolution. Nowadays the

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crusading, one scarcely needs add, is as a rule not in the name of God but of humanity. One wonders what meaning an American "uplifter", who at the same time professes to be a Christian, can attach to such sayings of Christ as "My peace I give unto you".

To make another contemporary application of the distinctions I have been attempting, what are we to think of Soviet Russia in its relation to the Orient? It has been said of Stalin in particular that he is Asiatic rather than European in his outlook. There is no doubt an element of truth in the saying "Scratch a Russian and you will find a Tartar". One may also grant that autocrats of the Stalin type have been seen in Asia—especially in barbaric Asia. The point that deserves emphasis, however, is that Stalin is using his autocratic power to further something almost inconceivably remote from anything known to the Asia of the past, namely Marxian materialism. Much that has passed as an expression of the Russian "soul" is, according to Jules Lemaître, only the Kalmuck exaggeration of French romantic ideas. In much the same way, the economic and deterministic explanation of history proclaimed by the Bolsheviks is only the Kalmuck exaggeration of the pseudo-science of the West.

Emotional romanticism and pseudo-science enter in varying proportions into the nationalism as well as the internationalism that have been sweeping Asia of late, and which are both more or less in conflict with its great traditions. Whatever notion Gandhi, for instance, may have of his own rôle, practically he has counted as a servant of the new Indian nationalism. If by Asia we mean the Asia of Buddha and Confucius and Christ (so far as Christ may be said still to have an Asiatic following) it has more reason to be alarmed at the present occidental invasion than Europe has, according to M. Massis, to be apprehensive of the corrupting influence of the East.

One should remember that the nationalism and internationalism of which I have been speaking are also of comparatively recent origin in the Occident and are likewise in conflict with much that it has held traditionally. Quite apart from tradition and purely as a matter of psychological analysis, the underlying opposition in all this clash of tendencies is that between those who affirm in some form the inner life and those who corrupt or deny it. Among the latter are those from Rousseau to Lenin who have discredited the higher will on which the inner life finally depends by their transfer of the struggle between good and evil from the heart of the individual to society. The higher will may be exercised, as I have said, on either the humanistic or the religious level. The humanistic form of the inner life seems to me to have a validity apart from religion (especially if by religion one means some theological formulation of the ultimate mysteries) far greater than Mr. Chesterton and others are willing to concede. Though Asia has much to offer the humanist in its Confucian lore, its superlative achievement, I have been trying to make clear, is to have produced a Christ and a Buddha. One may therefore conclude, waiving for the moment the debate as to the relative claims of humanism and religion as well as innumerable other subsidiary distinctions and disagreements, that there is a choice to be made, as a matter of first principles, between what Christ and Buddha, interpreted in their true spirit and without romantic distortion, represent, and all that is summed up in figures like Rousseau and Lenin. This choice, though it concerns primarily the inner life of the individual, will be found to involve finally all the main issues of civilization.

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AUBERGINE'S WAY

AFTER READING TOO MUCH PROUST (NATURALLY IN TRANSLATION)

by Robert Benchley

I was particularly pleased at having been asked to dinner at the Enrhumer's, in the first place because I had, in my youth, followed the explorations and excursions of Abbadie with great appreciation and had allowed my mind to become inextricably bound up with the pursuit of adventure in whatever form, a thing we are likely to do whenever we substitute for our own imaginings the imaginings of others, imaginings which we later appropriate as our own, forgetting completely their origin and feeling solely that they are an integral part of our own experience wholly apart from the vicarious nature of their entrance into our consciousness, and, in the second place, I was anxious to learn how Aubergine was faring in her acquaintanceship with Minette.

[*You may take off your coats if you wish.*]

I had left her on the evening of my encounter with the *sommelier* at the hotel which had resulted in so strange an insight into the mysteries and tragedies in the life of M. Odelette, and had heard her say that she was going to sit up with a sick friend, the nature of which illness she had not divulged to me but which I had suspected to be not as serious as she had insisted. I had extracted from her a promise to meet me on the following evening at our rendezvous by the Esplanade and the Café du Doc, but, as she neither appeared herself nor sent word by the young woman who she always maintained was her sister, I was oppressed by the feeling that Aubergine was herself becoming untrustworthy. Although I knew that this uneasiness on my part was in the nature of that indefinable sensitivity which exists in the stamens of certain flowers which imperceptibly sense the presence or absence, or absence-presence, of the insect bearing the fecundating pollen, a sensitivity which, owing to the innumerable subdivisions of the spadix, which, in turn, is connected with the pistil, or, if there be no pistil, then with the nearest group of racemes or small brown people who subsist almost entirely on rice, moving the finished product to the shipping-room where it is thrown quickly away, makes possible the subsequent auto-fecundation, even though the actual agent is not present, I was, nevertheless, worried.

[*Now twice around the track and into the locker-room for a shower.*]

In that great game of hide-and-seek which is played in our consciousness when we first become aware of a suspicion and, at the same time, attempt to elude it, there is no series of gradual approximations. We feel nothing, then suddenly the ugly thought springs full-armed into our mind and very differently accoutred from that which we had imagined in our theorizing over what we should do if it finally did arise. It is not the suspicion which we had suspected. No, I rather believe that, as we go on living, we pass our time in

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consecutive zones of alternate suspicion and reassurance, the one leading into the other and finally becoming indistinguishable from the other, and it was only by the exercise of my conviction on this point that I was able definitely to come to the conclusion that I suspected Aubergine of duplicity. It was for this reason that I was so anxious to accept the Enrhumer's invitation to dinner.

I had arrived in good time, for parties of this sort are usually without time in themselves. They have little reality until they have become—to the invited guest, at any rate—a figment of an imaginary festivity, a goose, a *garniture*, a *bombe*, or, what is even more difficult to comprehend, a plausible, if unreal, *tour de force* of gastronomy. Mme Vouziers met me in the center, or so it seemed to me, of the drawing-room, flanked by Baron Geitz, the German ambassador, and Prince d'Egaré. One heard an incessant "Good evening, M. de Huissier, good evening, Mme Grange, good evening, M. Pervers, good evening, my dear Count, is your daughter here? Good evening, Bill! Good evening, Mlle Fichoir, good evening, Duc de Courvoisier, may I introduce you to the Duchesse de Courvoisier? Oh, Marquis d'Arrière, there is someone in the drawing-room who is very anxious to see you! Good evening, Comte and Comtesse de Voyeur, M. le Duc de Polygame, Marquise de Morve *née* du Mesnil, Madame Eléonore-Euphrasie-Humbertine de Croupon, Prince Jarski, George M. Platt, Duc and Duchesse de Créquier, good evening, good evening, good evening!" one heard.

I myself was ushered into the card-room where, much to my delight, I at length had the pleasure of seeing M. de Fréjus leave. My dislike of M. de Fréjus was based on nothing less simple than a certain anaphylaxis, detectable only when the object of my aversion was present, or just leaving, or, as is so often the case with us when our systems have become mithridatized against definite poisons, just coming. I was now able to join the group which M. de Fréjus had just left, and to throw myself, with some degree of vigour, into the conversation. It had been begun by M. de Lentilleux, a distinguished engineer, who was discussing the development of the fan as an instrument of social progress. "For example," he was saying, as I approached the group, "with the ancients the fan (*éventail*) was known as a 'winnower' (*vanneur*) and used as a bellows or fly whisk. Even our modern usage gives us the fan as an instrument for winnowing grain or, to go still further, an appliance in various systems of ventilation. But, with your permission, I shall confine my comments to the fan (*éventail*) as we know it, the screen fan and the folding fan, both excellent appurtenances. In general, the former (or latter) consists of a handle to which is attached a rigid mount—except, of course, I need hardly say, feather fans, which may be included in this class, the usual mount is made of straw, cane, silk, parchment, or and so forth, and is square, circular, pear or leaf-shaped. I mean leaf-shaped. By the eighteenth century it is unquestionable that the fan had become more an item of personal attraction, although I myself could never see it as such, considering it ungainly and slightly dangerous when wielded by a strong woman, as witness the *cabriolet*, a folding fan in vogue during the time of Louis XV. This was named after the light two-wheeled carriage so popular in France at that time, a vehicle which is often represented in the scenes painted, or engraved, on the mounts. This, no doubt, led to the introduction of the Vernis-Martin fan, one of the most rare of collectors' items. The name Vernis-Martin was derived from a certain translucent varnish—

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[*This sort of thing is going on for quite a bit longer. I thought you ought to know.*]

a certain translucent varnish accidentally discovered by the brothers Martin when they were trying to imitate Japanese lacquer. It is, of course, with the Japanese that the fan is most closely associated with the lives and customs of the people. Rhead, in his *History of the Fan*, a large but inaccurate book as I shall presently show, says that the Japanese regard the fan as an emblem of life, widening and expanding as the sticks radiate from the rivet. This I cannot agree with, as very often with life the tendency is toward a *con*vergence (from the Latin *con* and *vergo*) rather than radiation. However, most interesting of the types of Japanese fans is the *Gumbai Uchuia*, a rigid fan made for use in battle and entirely of iron (eleventh century). The *Akomé Ogi* is the earliest form of court fan, having come into use in the seventh century, or four centuries earlier than the *Gumbai Uchuia*, and was composed of thirty-eight blades (a lot of blades) fastened with a rivet, formed of a bird or butterfly and ornamented at the corners with artificial flowers and twelve streamers of coloured silks."

[*What did I tell you?*]

I protested that LaDup, our old fan instructor at the University, had always told us that the *Akomé Ogi* had only eight streamers. "Quite likely," he responded, "LaDup, while he was at the University, was a victim of a neurasthenia which might very easily have warped his judgment in such matters. Neurasthenia, complicated by an interest in fans, sometimes develops into an arthritis, just as an arthritis, which is only a toxic form of neurasthenia, develops sometimes into an interest in fans. You may pass from one to the other by metastasis. I have often noticed . . ."

But I was prevented from taking any further part in the conversation by the entrance of M. d'Orgue, who reminded me, by means of one of those glances which we so often give when we are impelled by some strange impulse which can only arise from having given such glances in our youth to someone to whom we wanted to give such a glance, that I had as yet heard no word from Aubergine. Making my apologies to Mme Personne, the Duchesse de Lenteur, the Turkish Ambassador, Duc de Seps and a small man in white whom I did not know, I returned to my hotel.

[*Enough?*]

The discussion which I had just had with M. de Lentilleux remained fixed in my mind as I ascended in the lift to my room. There is a common brotherhood, a bond which is as ineffable as it is indescribable, between two hay-fever sufferers, which eliminates all outsiders and brings the two into a spiritual union, tragic, and, at the same time, comic to the rest of the world. Those who suffer from hay-fever in solitude are precisely those to whom concealment is most painful. They belong to a life which non-sufferers not only cannot understand, cannot imagine, cannot consecrate, abominate the ludicrousness of, but would be filled with disgust by the periodicity of its occurrence. Perhaps, to form a picture of these, we ought to think, if not of the wild animals who have never become domesticated, then at least of the Negroes whom the comfortable existence of the white man renders desperately unhappy. When the day has dawned on which they have discovered themselves to be incapable of entering polite society with apology, they go away to live by themselves in seclusion,

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shunning the society of their own kind (whom they believe to be few in number). Now and again, some Sunday evening when there is no moon, they go for a solitary walk, on which they meet someone who has the same affliction. Or they enter a drawing-room, against their better judgment, where, in a corner, they find someone sitting, with handkerchief pressed to nose, who looks with streaming eyes and recognizes a brother. Not a word is spoken, not a hand is clasped, but between the two there is struck a spark which cannot but result in an undying friendship, laughed at by some, misunderstood by others, which transcends all man-made unions. Are they not, with the transparent velvet of their petals, as it were the mauve orchids of the sea? The feud between the Capulets and the Montagues was as nothing compared with the obstacles of every sort which must have been surmounted, the special eliminations which nature has to submit to, the hazards, already far from common, before a man from Harvard, let us say, stands in brotherhood, before a Princeton graduate, merely because the nasal tissue of one reacts in the same way to the pollen of the ragweed (*ambrosia trifida*) as that of the other. It was only when the lift had reached the floor on which my room was situated, that I ceased to marvel at this phenomenon. It was only then that I remembered that I had, as yet, had no word from Aubergine.

I had failed during my first visit to Bras —and perhaps, for that matter, Aubergine had failed equally—to understand Aubergine's character. I had put it down to frivolity that she had not appeared to meet me that night at the Café du Doc, for she had shewed herself in various colours on certain occasions (by which I mean the occasions as seen by me, from my side of the glass which was by no means transparent, or, if anybody cares, translucent, or the hell with it). On one occasion I had asked Aubergine, I had implored her, to remain with me, but, as so often happens when we look away, she had walked off while I was talking. This had, in a certain sense, worried me, for I still had a feeling that her friendship with Minette was inimical to my prospects, if indeed I could be said to have prospects, but here again I was confronted by the thought that, just as the bee . . .

[*This is getting to be just silly.*]

(*In the next volume, "Aubergine Disparue", we shall discover why Aubergine thought it hardly worth her while to stick. And can we blame her?*)

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VIRGINIA WOOLF

by Edwin Muir

MRS. WOOLF'S first novel was *The Voyage Out*; *The Waves* is her latest. There is little in common between those two books, one is tempted to say, except the sea, which is in them both. The sea indeed is in all Mrs. Woolf's books, either as a background or a memory, and not even the walls of London can keep it out. Her mind appears loath to travel quite beyond sight or sound of it, and she employs it by preference as a reservoir of similes and metaphors. It appears in the opening page of *Mrs. Dalloway*, which is a novel whose very theme is London, and one remembers also that other passage describing the heroine sewing a silk green dress. She "collected the green folds together and attached them, very lightly, to the belt. So on a summer's day waves collect, overbalance, and fall". The simile is recondite and yet strangely apt; it could have occurred only to a writer who thought often about the sea, so often that it came to hold more and more unexpected and abstruse correspondences. In *To the Lighthouse* the sea has actually grown dangerous, becoming something very like a symbol, a fact which may help to explain the occasional unreality of that book. It may help to explain also why in *The Waves* one of the characters damns symbolism so heartily. There is no symbolism, however, in *The Waves*; there is, on the contrary, something in comparison with which symbolism appears a mere makeshift.

But without trying to discover what the sea is a symbol for in Mrs. Woolf's books, it is clear enough that it stands for something in her imagination, and it is this something that connects her first book with her latest, and at the same time, taking advantage of the privilege of an ocean, explains the great distance between them. *The Voyage Out* was at least innocently symbolical; it was at once a very remarkable first novel in the conventional style of the time, owing a little to Chekhov, as most good novels did just then, and also a first voyage out over unknown seas where, at least as a possibility, lay the islands which Mrs. Woolf later discovered.

There is, for instance, in *The Voyage Out* as in its immediate successor *Night and Day*, that sense of a confusion of categories, of tragedy and comedy coexisting in the same situation, which she found such original ways of expressing in her later books. At first she conveyed this mixture of comedy and tragedy as certain of the English novelists had done before her; Sterne in particular, the supreme master in this style; and Scott, a writer whose name recurs persistently in her books, almost like a refrain; but she did not permit herself their whole-hearted resignation to a shamelessly luxurious emotion; it brought her troubled thought rather than care-free effusion. In this she complied with the spirit of the age. For one reason or another—perhaps it is the spread of a more scientific way of regarding everything, including our emotions, perhaps it is merely

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that the emphatically unemphatic code of the public schools is extending everywhere —a novelist nowadays who values his or her intelligence is reluctant to deal in tears, far less therefore in tears and laughter in the same breath. We are so much more austere in such matters than our ancestors that scenes which were to them an opportunity for people of sensibility to evince the delicacy of their feelings now disgust us by their indelicacy. We are repelled indeed by quite a number of things in these half-comic, half-pathetic scenes: by the unnecessary piling on of the agony, the almost nonsensical clash between two zones of emotion, two worlds of emotion, and by the conduct of the novelist, who makes not the slightest effort to square them, but instead is transparently pleased at having arrived at such a happy sentimental conjuncture, and wishes us to admire him for his punctuality.

Tears are a solvent, laughter is a catharsis, but in an age when people analyze their emotional responses, these particular ones too must lose something of their authority, until it becomes doubtful whether they can claim even to be legitimate. So the sort of emotional complex which once evoked them, either singly or simultaneously, and in doing so apparently resolved itself, nowadays continues to burden the writer's mind, which in turn has to work at high pressure to resolve it and get rid of it. In other words the art of fiction has become more intellectual. So that what was a glorious opportunity a hundred or even fifty years ago has turned into a tormenting problem, which, sometimes much against his will, leads the novelist on through a whole series of questions: How can such contrasts coexist? What are tragedy and comedy? What is experience? and finally, Why am I asking all these questions at all, seeing that I know there is no answer to them? Mrs. Woolf's questions begin, I think, from this problem of the coexistence of comedy and tragedy, at any rate from a perceived fundamental ambiguity in life, to which laughter and tears, even in solution, are not a sufficient or even an apposite reply. Starting from this problem, and it is formulated in her first two books, the progressive development of Mrs. Woolf's art, up to its crown in her latest book, is quite comprehensible.

Yet in spite of that her first two books are very unlike their successors. In them she conscientiously accepted the novel as it was; she treated its limitations with solicitous respect; she seemed resolved above all to avoid the characteristic virtues which we recognize now as hers: she refused to take any short cuts, and she eschewed not only lightness, but the very appearance of it. Parts of *Night and Day* are actually dull, and not with a naturally outpouring dulness, but with the more deadly sort secreted by a writer resolved to concentrate on her job and carry it out according to given rules whatever the spectator may think; it is a kind of dulness that may almost be called disinterested, even self-sacrificing. From the writing of *Night and Day* Mrs. Woolf must have learned a very great deal, but apart from that the book is a fine one; if the mould did not suit the author's genius, what she poured into it was entirely her own. There are scenes in it which persistently linger in the memory: the meeting between Denham and Rodney on the Embankment, and Katherine's wanderings through London on the evening that she broke her appointment. There is also that exquisite interior, the Hilbery household, and the delightful Mrs. Hilbery. The strange thing about *Night and Day* as about *The Voyage Out* is the general not displeasing grayness

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as of a winter's day in London; the light which irradiates every scene she touched later is quite absent.

It began to tinge her work as soon as she entered on what may be called her experimental stage. There is a glimmer of it in *Monday or Tuesday*, a small volume of sketches; it flickers brilliantly but fitfully in *Jacob's Room*, shines steadily in *Mrs. Dalloway*, fades considerably in *To the Lighthouse*, but in *The Waves* gives a more intense light than ever before, a light from which veil after veil has fallen. *The Waves* is so greatly superior to anything else of Mrs. Woolf's that one is tempted to consider the rest of her work, even the exquisite *Mrs. Dalloway*, as irrelevant, and to take this as the sole measure of her genius.

But that would be unjust, for Mrs. Woolf is one of those writers whose very failures and half-successes are valuable as marking a line of development. So *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse* with their hesitancies, their occasional dulnesses, their traces of falsity, are more to be admired than the easy success of *Orlando*. *Orlando* is a charming and unreal trifle; a little too deliberately charming, perhaps, and a little irritatingly unreal, for it is never quite unreal. But it is difficult for Mrs. Woolf to rid herself of all seriousness when Time is her theme; it is the problem that has occupied her ever since *Jacob's Room*. The idea of *Orlando* was a witty one; a character who survives for several centuries, maintaining his identity, but changing his attributes so radically that, beginning as the hero of the story he ends as its heroine: this was an admirable invention for incarnating the impartiality of Time's mutations. Yet as Mrs. Woolf cannot take such things merely wittily or merely fancifully, the wit is less detached than wit should be, and the fancy has never quite the freedom of fancy. The book is a success in an illegitimate style; the comparative failures of *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse* are worth a score of such triumphs.

In *Jacob's Room* Mrs. Woolf recreated a character through memories and associations, and gathered the limbs of Osiris imbedded in various strata of time and space. The separate limbs are exquisitely articulated, but one has the impression that some have not been retrieved, and that the others have been assembled somewhat haphazardly. The book is fragmentary. In *To the Lighthouse* she strove rather to evoke Time itself, both directly and through the characters. The book consists of three parts. The first describes a summer's day in the Hebrides; it is followed by a short section called "Time Passes"; then there is another summer's day several years later in the same, now changed, setting. As a single achievement the middle section of this book is perhaps the best thing Mrs. Woolf wrote before *The Waves*. It describes the gradual dilapidation of the house where the action has passed and will pass again. The house is beset by countless great and little forces, by wind, rain, mice, dust, neglect, its own age. A very powerful sense of time is conveyed in this way. But when Mrs. Woolf writes about time she is carried away; the middle section of *To the Lighthouse* is consequently far too strong for the other two: it did not need all this, one feels, to make a few characters a few years older. The time she evokes has hardly anything to do with individual human life at all, except accidentally, like evolution, for example; it is so much too powerful that it seems to have no effect at all, like an electric charge which, multiplied a thousand times, passes through one's body without one's feeling it, whereas, reduced to the right voltage, it would act devastatingly.

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Mrs. Dalloway, which came between *Jacob's Room* and *To the Lighthouse*, is more perfect than either. In it, instead of scattering her characters through time, Mrs. Woolf gathers them into a single summer's day in London, and in doing so gathers time there too, thus producing for us another of its ambiguous facets. Everything in this book is steeped in time, either as a memory or a property of this one day, so that it is difficult to tell what the figures are which move about in it, whether they are mere aspects of a day, or human characters who would be as solid in sullen and foggy weather. There is something more dreamlike, one imagines, than the author intended, in those figures whose names one forgets so soon, while remembering their little mechanical gestures, and the bright rooms and streets, the sounds of bells and traffic that surround them. But if they are more than commonly perishable it is at least partly the author's almost clairvoyant sense of time that makes them so; they fade when subjected to it as certain colours do in an intense light. So that all the undoubtedly deft characterization which Mrs. Woolf lavishes on them seems wasted, and is sometimes tiresome; it is as if she were trying to characterize eleven o'clock in the morning, or four in the afternoon, for the characters might almost have been called after the hours. As parts of the changing moods of one day they are charming, they are even real; it is when the author tries to give them the attributes of independent entities that everything becomes false. Her characterization is skilful, understanding, sensitive, and the only thing that keeps it from being masterly is that it is not applied to characters; there are none in the book.

Mrs. Woolf quite discards characterization in the ordinary sense in *The Waves*, and her vision of life at last stands out clearly. She seems no longer concerned with temporal attributes in this book, but with permanent things: the problem of time which she has pursued for so long has yielded her here a resolution. The six figures whose monologues make it up are beings freed from the illusions of time. They stand beyond time and see themselves within it; they incarnate something in the spirit which in the midst of change is not deceived. They have been blamed for not being characters, and very ignorantly; for to such beings character is merely a costume they put on, and have to put on, before they go on the temporal stage to play their parts. If they are to be called characters at all, then they are characters who have awakened.

It is difficult to find any parallels in literature for these six figures, or for the dimension in which they move. One may be reminded now and then of Pirandello's much overpraised *Six Characters in Search of an Author*; but the resemblance is only a surface one. For Pirandello merely presents schematically a few aspects of illusion, whereas Mrs. Woolf has pierced to something deeper, to that part of us which refuses to be deceived. Is there a part of us which refuses to be deceived? If there is, it exists where consciousness is most intense, alert and magnanimous. It exists also at a level where laughter and tears, whether singly or simultaneously, are no longer apposite responses. These six figures are something new in literature, so new that a critic may legitimately refuse to try to find a formula for it. The book is a continuous revelation on a level rarely touched by the novelist.

In conception, however, it is quite simple. Six characters, three men and three women, tell in alternate monologue their stories from childhood to middle age. The whole is written in the present tense, the response of the

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monologist accompanying every event as it happens, the awake character who regards and the somnambulist character who acts being indissolubly attached and yet separate. Seen by this passionate observer all action, all emotion, all change becomes a series of pictures. "There is a hill striped with houses. A man crosses a bridge with a dog at his heels. Now the red boy begins firing at the pheasant. The blue boy shoves him aside. 'My uncle is the best shot in England. My cousin is Master of Foxhounds.' " "The cart grows gradually larger as it comes along the road. The sheep gather in the middle of the field. The birds gather in the middle of the road—they need not fly yet. The wood smoke rises. The starkness of the dawn is going out of it." In a stream the pictures follow one another. "And when evening comes and the lamps are lit they make a yellow fire in the ivy." "A child playing—a summer evening—doors will open and shut, will keep opening and shutting, through which I see sights that make me weep. For they cannot be imparted. Hence our loneliness; hence our desolation. I turn to that spot in my mind and find it empty." "There is the puddle, and I cannot cross it. I hear the rush of the great grindstone within an inch of my head. Its wind roars in my face. All palpable forms of life have failed me. Unless I can stretch and touch something hard, I shall be blown down the eternal corridors forever. What, then, can I touch? What brick, what stone? and so draw myself across the enormous gulf into my body safely?" "It was only for a moment, catching sight of myself before I had time to prepare myself as I always prepare myself for the sight of myself, that I quailed. It is true; I am not young." "So I went out. I saw the first morning he would never see—the sparrows were like toys dangled from a string by a child." Why are all those pictures so strangely vivid, like windows violently broken in the closed wall of experience? Because they are seen not by the acting character, but by his other self who watches him from beyond time. "All these things", one of the six says, "happen in one second and last forever." Such sufferings and pleasures are like those of bound spirits to whom has been left the liberty to look and judge.

Mrs. Woolf's conception of life in this book is a pessimistic one lightened only by the supersensual pleasures of the contemplating self. "All these things happen in a second and last forever." "If there are no stories, what end can there be, or what beginning? Life is not susceptible perhaps to the treatment we give it when we try to tell it." (Incidentally this has not prevented her from trying to tell it.) "But now I made the contribution of maturity to childhood's intuitions—satiety and doom; the sense of what is unescapable in our lot; death; the knowledge of limitations; how life is more obdurate than one had thought it." And in a description of a meeting of all the six figures: "We saw for a moment laid out among us the body of the complete human being whom we have failed to be, but at the same time, cannot forget". It is in intellectual formulations such as these that the grief of Mrs. Woolf's ideal observers finds its keenest edge. That grief is very keen, but it is not a grief that can be solved by tears; it is hostile to them.

Nothing is stranger in modern literature, and nothing probably could tell us more about it, than this hostility to tears, the mark at which once even the greatest writers aimed. All that one can do is to note it. The modern writer, no matter how passionately or deeply he may feel, is never concerned with the tears in things. D. H. Lawrence was a man who felt and wrote with conspicuous passion; George Eliot, let us say,

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was a woman who felt and wrote not with conspicuous passion; yet in her calm way she tapped the fount of tears, whereas D. H. Lawrence, while arousing many emotions in our breasts, quite ignored this immemorial source of relief. In spite of all his anti-intellectualism he was more penetrated by what he himself called the virus of intellect than George Eliot, though she was as powerfully resolved to be intellectual, as he to be "instinctive". Indeed almost all modern novelists are more intellectual in a certain sense than any of their predecessors of fifty years ago: in the sense that the intellect conditions their emotional responses more decisively, making those responses less naïve and immediately satisfying. More deliberate and unsure also, however; for it is difficult to achieve, where the intellect is in part control, any effect possessing the simple inevitability of a burst of tears. This may partly account for the sense of emotional frustration, of indefinite postponement, which so many modern novels produce. It may account, for instance, for Lawrence's equivocal operation on us. The old catharsis was definitely impossible; the new one was difficult to find. In *The Waves* a new catharsis has been found. Its art is at once modern and complete.

The great step forward that Mrs. Woolf made in *The Waves* is reflected also in the style. *Mrs. Dalloway* was a wonderful piece of writing, but its grace had a touch of hesitation, even of fussiness, with all those clauses and sentences ending in "ing". But the passage describing Clarissa sewing the silk dress is one of the finest in the book, and may serve for a test of comparison:

"So on a summer's day waves collect, overbalance, and fall; collect and fall; and the whole world seems to be saying 'that is all' more and more ponderously, until even the heart in the body which lies in the sun on the beach says too, That is all. Fear no more, says the heart. Fear no more, says the heart, committing its burden to some sea, which sighs collectively for all sorrows, and renews, begins, collects, lets fall. And the body alone listens to the passing bee; the wave breaking; the dog barking, far away barking and barking."

How different the rhythm of that is from that of the passages I have quoted from *The Waves*. It is a fluttering rhythm, a rhythm in which a thousand almost imperceptible hesitations are concealed. In *The Waves* this prose has put away all hesitation, and cuts out images and thoughts in one sweep. It is impatiently, almost violently immediate. What it recalls most strongly is Rilke's superb prose, which was a sort of inspired shorthand. And one imagines that it has changed in this astonishing way because Mrs. Woolf is dealing directly now with immediate and essential truths of experience. The result is an authentic and unique masterpiece, which is bound to have an influence on the mind of this generation.

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THE TROUBLE WITH AUTHORS

VARIATIONS ON THE THEME "AUTHORS ARE AWFUL"

by Maristan Chapman

A PUBLISHER, discreetly anonymous, remarked not long ago in THE BOOKMAN that Authors Are Awful. We hasten to admit the generalization. Equally we agree with the answering publisher who declares that they are not so bad, for the question is not so much whether authors are or not, but how we became so, if.

The answer (totally unsupported by questionnaires issued to five hundred well-known authors) is this: coercion of modern publishing methods, which in turn result from the unlucky habit of reading, is responsible for the depravity of authors, and, conversely, for their probity. It should be understood at once that the present writer does not intend to Awfulize; that is to say he does not meditate a counter-attack upon publishers, who are indeed co-victims with the authors of the superficial universal literacy.

Before committing obfuscation it becomes necessary to confuse the issue by examining a specimen of Author, that strange, reluctant being who is at once the cause and the result of the Invention of Printing. Your average author, despite his well-known character compounded of egotism, vanity, touchiness and temper, is—until prodded—a remarkably docile creature. He is, furthermore, relatively harmless. He spends his days in retirement, scrawling marks on paper, and making infrequent incursions upon the editorial offices in the effort to convert his typing into printing and thence into living expenses. But he is not left alone to pursue this placid calling. He is talked about, talked at, and discussed with as much freedom as if he were a museum specimen. He is dated as to style and period, and relegated to a class. Worse than this, he receives the doubtful honour of being excused for his offences because he is outside the law. He is pardoned for his gaucheries because he is "like a child and knows no better". Nothing he can do toward protesting his responsibility for his own acts elicits more than a tolerant smile.

In exchange for this concessionary attitude on the part of his public, the author is expected to submit to being exploited, repressed, derided, lauded, or led docilely to the critical slaughter. Critics formulate his ideas for him; they elevate into a doctrine some casual declaration of opinion that has only an immediate application, and the public thereafter demands that the author stand by his expressed opinions. As if an author dare express opinions where this is done for him so completely! It is assumed that in abrogating the right of self-expression through his books, he has, by implication, abdicated the right to any expression whatsoever. An author is to be talked at and not to, and whether cajoled or condemned may only reply by dignified silence. This repression has so soured him that he has become Peculiar; and has almost acquiesced in the conspiracy to make him An Unnatural Creature.

In addition to this public interest in his

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private life, the author must support the commentators and annotators by whom he is held up in the mass as Our Modern Writers, Contemporary Novelists, Literary Tendencies; or else he is laid bare singly in Biographical Sketches. It is right enough that his work be judged and estimated in public reviews. Though he squirm and writhe in consequence, this is good and wholesome exercise for the author. But when the reviewers concern themselves with his mind, morals, and private affairs and indicate that in the handling of these matters he is, being an author, no better than an incompetent and a minor, they go too far. And having gone too far, they go further. The author is told how he came to be what he is; the processes underlying his creations are made clear to him, and psychological motives are assigned for his preference for living at Great Neck or Medicine Hat rather than at Walla Walla, Wash. Finally he is supplied with a ready-made list of personal habits, hobbies and domestic pets. Any deviation on his part from these assigned tastes and prejudices is regarded as an unfair trick, or as evidence of Peculiarity; while an author who insists upon his right to mind his own business and to indulge in the luxury of human inconsistency of ideas, is branded as Abnormal.

The torture cannot be compared to the Inquisition, for, though constantly questioned, the unfortunate wight is not supposed to admit, recant, defy or defend. His occasional outcries are regarded as undignified, or as very funny.

The baiting of authors has become a recognized sport, which is now and then enlivened into a form of cock-fighting when two of them can be teased into attacking one another for the amusement of their public. This is the first great cause of Awfulness in Authors. The desperate defiance engendered by this attitude of the Reading Public leads directly to all the vices hereinbefore enumerated.

To return to the earlier question (see paragraph No. 2, or thereabouts) how did the author arrive at his present confused status? Was his abandonment of the Profession of Letters for the more lucrative Trade of Writing altogether his own doing, or was it (to take refuge in the popular excuse) a necessary concomitant of This Modern Trend?

Modern publishing methods (continue to see paragraph No. 2) are in their turn the helpless result of mechanization. A flood of books has overwhelmed publishers, booksellers, critics, readers and authors. The manufacture and handling of vast numbers of volumes is a task of such magnitude that there is less and less time for any one to look inside any of them. Since the old-fashioned plan of reading must be abandoned, some other method of keeping afloat must be resorted to. Hence publicity, and the entry of publishers into competitive advertising, itself a rushing river never meant to be navigated by these once speculative souls.

With drug stores and book clubs in hot competition for supremacy as purveyors of literature, the publisher must take part in the fracas and supply books in quantity. And he must see to it that his authors come along too. No more meditation in the library, no more leisurely research, but so many books, so many dollars. And here is the seed of more Awfulness.

It cannot be helped. The situation has been created by that liaison officer General Education, who has dragooned the populace into reading. Protesting publishers and indignant* authors must live, or so they claim, even though they may suspect that everybody reading everything is much the same as nobody reading anything.

* *Erratum:* for *indignant* read *indigent.*

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For voluntary starvation is not easy, and deliberately to cease to provide for dependents merely because of a personal preference for slow and more perfect art is not to be thought of. Sternly warned by his publisher that this is not the time to be particular and precise, the author submits to publicity. The wretched writer may protest that he fears and loathes publicity, but Herr Freud has invalidated the plea by turning all Noes into Yeses. To maintain an aversion to cameras and reporters is really to confess a suppressed yearning for them. Besides, there is the example of the few authors who have tasted the delights of exploitation and now demand and cry for it. "If," says the publisher to the reluctant purveyor of his raw material, "if you will not be Made Over Night, then some other author will, and he's my man."

And why not try for first place, thinks the author? Consider how many books that ought properly to have perished in manuscript are now the Best of the Month. The most coy and shrinking of authors will admit that his own book is better than these. Yet before yielding finally to what he terms egregious commercialism, he takes a sad backward look at his hopes and his dreams that were to be expressed in art of words; then he looks forward, abandons his art for the sake of his grocer and becomes Awful, *i.e.*, competitive.

And a competitive author is no laughing matter. He is one-ideaed, violent and persistent. A fearsome creature, once roused, for he now labours with all the indignation engendered by the necessity. It is true that no amount of commercial competition justifies his human weaknesses of vanity, perfidy and erraticalness, but personal vices are no more peculiar to authors than inefficiency in business is the sole prerogative of publishers.

It is thus clear that neither author nor publisher is inherently Awful. The blame for the awfulness of both must rest with the readers. In this woeful day when all can read, there is the necessity for swift perusal and quick forgetting. There is no longer the steady demand for particular authors. A Book—any book, so long as it is new, poignant, thrilling, smashing, provoking and arresting, will do. "Never mind who wrote it," says the reader, "and I never did care who published it," says he. "More books!"

An author's product must now be a matter of mass production. His novel is multiplied frantically by machinery. It is sold in packages of standard weight and price, fresh from the factory, untouched by human mind. This literature, wrapped in colophon, makes necessary the participation of the author in affairs. He does not belong there, and the necessity has a pernicious effect upon his character, making him nosy, pushing, acrid and exasperating.

Readers must accept the world as they have made it. But let them refrain from making irresponsible domestic pets of authors lest they become increasingly Awful. Let it be granted that authors vary between bad and worse, but permit them the inalienable right to vary in mood and to be humanly ill-mannered now and then. Authors should not, must not, shall not be bandied about like inanimate objects, or like machines for the production of volumes. Be it further enacted that it shall be hereafter unlawful to discuss them before their faces and stare at them behind their backs.

Is the machinery of the age to mince them utterly? Are we to nourish a stereotype in our bosoms? Are we to erect a linotype in our market place? Very likely we are. In fact we have.

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A STAGE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

by Ford Madox Ford

MRS. TATE'S book, *Penhally*,* is a phenomenon for which I have long waited. The distinguishing feature of the new wave of literature that for nearly a decade has been coming from America has been a refreshing and admirable vigour. It was not by accident that of the imaginative work that I printed in the *Transatlantic Review* eight years ago, by far the greater part came from the United States, though I had both France and England to draw on. That was occasioned by the sheer pleasure that I felt in coming in contact with fresh—and with very keen—young minds. They expressed themselves, moreover, admirably; they observed life with an astonishing justness. And the mass of work that came was astonishing. It was merely as you might say, the turn of a hair—or to be literal the turns of a phrase or two—that made me select a manuscript for publication or turn down another. As it was I turned down several writers whom I have since much regretted.

I do not mean to say that the sixty percent or so of American work in the contents of that magazine represented the world balance in merit of literary output at that date. I should be inclined to say that now it did. At that time, Proust, Anatole France, Thomas Hardy and Conrad were all still living, not to mention D. H. Lawrence or even Arnold Bennett. They were of course all past their primes, but you could not rule them out.

Now, the literary landscape has very considerably altered, the balance of altitudes sloping towards the West. So far as I know the twelve years that have passed since the war have produced nothing very new in England. There have been the admirable novels of Mrs. Virginia Woolf and the clever pastiches of Mr. David Garnett. There has also been the masterly *High Wind in Jamaica* of Mr. Richard Hughes. It may be that it is my fault that nothing else has come through to me. But the works of those three writers are all that have, the rest of England seeming to mark time, like a disciplined regiment of guards, forever trampling on the same spot. Mr. Wells and Mr. Galsworthy represent the Old Guard, but unchangingly. There is certainly no movement. Above all there is no Movement.

The case of France is more subtle. She has still three great figures in Paul Bourget, André Gide and Henri de Régnier; she has one great writer still in full activity in M. René Béhaine. And she has always Colette! But she has what no other country has—a great literary tradition. This tradition consists rather in conditions of work, in discipline, in consciousness of methods, and in the air you breathe than in individual figures. There have been periods in the history of France when she has had no books—but she has always had a literature. Today again she seems for the moment to have next to no books. Of works that really "stick out" I can at the moment think of only M. Bernanos's *Sous le soleil de Satan* and *Les bien Pen-*

* *Penhally* by Caroline Gordon (Scribner's. $2.50).

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sants. But she has a great number of disparate writers like MM. Drieu la Rochelle, Cocteau, Benda, Cassou, Carco, Delteil, Morand—I could go on reciting names for a quarter of a page!—any one of whom can be trusted to give you something worth serious consideration. And I mean literary consideration. That is to say that if you pick up by chance any of their books and if you are a writer they will, by their methods, their writing and their attack on a subject, give you something that you don't know and that is worth thinking about. That is the real test of a literature. It is not the production of immense works of the order of those of a demi-god demi-imbecile like Hugo; it happens when a man of some literary culture can feel with confidence that he can go, say, to a railway bookstall or a country bookseller's in a small town and, stretching out his hand haphazard, chance as likely as not on something worthy of his adult consideration.

Neither England nor America has ever been in this situation. It has been impossible for any at all cultured man to consider going out of two or three cities in either country without dismay—and such a provision of mental sustainment as he would carry in the way of canned goods supposing he were contemplating a stay in the Arctic Circle. Conditions have always been a little better in that way in America than in England. In the earliest times she had at least itinerant vendors of books and on account of her vastness her local centers have been much more of centers for the supply of what culture she needs than was ever the case in England outside Oxford or Cambridge and the Metropolis. In England today there are, outside those three, perhaps four cities in which you could be certain, if you knew the ropes *very* well, of finding at least reasonably good new books by old favourites in one bookseller's shop. In America outside New York and Chicago and say, Yale and Harvard, to balance Oxford and Cambridge, you will find a hundred or so—say two to each state and a few over. And the vested interests of scholasticism and the publishing houses being less strongly rooted you will find in such American towns new books of merit by new writers as soon as you will find the semi-meritorious works of established writers. In consequence you can discern—and you could have discerned at any time during the last decade—something like a literary movement in the United States. I do not mean a clique in New York.

Where you have such local centers you will have local artists. That is a good thing for a country because it widens the human field on which it can draw for works of art. English writing is provincial because it draws, if not invariably its colour, then at least its frame of mind from London. The writing of someone born and brought up in a suburb of a middle-Western city has as a rule, paradoxically enough, a quality of universality because its author is habituated to looking to places beyond his home skies for mental leads to points of view.

Being born in a small place is fatal to a small writer: it is salvation for anyone born with breadth of mind or with any chance of attaining to it. The American literary movement of today was a product originally of the Middle West at its widest: it is today being reinforced by the South—I am tempted, for sake of the joke, to say at its narrowest. Of the five writers who today most interest me at the moment and who at the same time have been presented efficiently enough to make it likely that the lay reader will follow me when I name them, three are from the Middle West and two from the South—Mr. Hemingway from a suburb of Chicago,

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Mr. Glenway Wescott from Wisconsin countrysides, Mr. George Davis from Michigan, Miss Elizabeth Madox Roberts from Virginia, and Mrs. Tate from the Tennessee border of Kentucky. Of let us say five of whom I think often but who have either not found publishers or who have been published inefficiently, one is from North Dakota, one from South Dakota, one from Chicago, one from California. As for the fifth I do not know quite where he comes from, only that he lives near Philadelphia, in the country; as for Mr. Nathan Asch and Miss Kay Boyle, for whose work I have a particular regard, I am uncertain as to their places of origin. They may well stand for American writers of cosmopolitan colorations, though Mr. Asch is the only true New Yorker of the lot. But it is time that New York renamed itself Cosmopolis.

Reflecting on this considerable number of writers, all of much the same tendencies, all of great energy, all of the same period, nearly all writing with an extreme beauty, you will see, as it were emerging from the mists that usually obscure literary landscapes, the outlines of a very formidable School indeed. If you add to it, to give it weight and tradition, the formidable figure of Mr. Dreiser and the figure suggested by the best work of Mr. Sherwood Anderson, both of whom might well stand for pioneers, you will discern that America has a literature in complexion a little like that which I began by accrediting to France. I could, that is to say, go on cataloguing writers' names for a long time, and the works of each of the writers named would give any other writer something very seriously to think of. That is really the criterion.

If I use Mrs. Tate's book as the peg on which to hang this dissertation on the birth of a nation—for the birth of a nation is not fully accomplished until it has its literature—it is less because I think it the best constructed novel that modern America has produced than because it has occasioned me to have these thoughts. First I wrote down the names of the book and Miss Caroline Gordon, who of course is Mrs. Allen Tate, and then proceeded to reflect with the results that you see. The publication of *Penhally* and of Mr. Davis's *The Opening of a Door* within a month or so of each other marks—at any rate for me, and I haven't much doubt that in the event it will mark for the rest of the world—a very definite stage in the evolution of American literature.

Hitherto—until practically the twenties of this century—it has derived either, as in the case of the Concord group, directly in temperament from English writers of the more virtuous and monumental order, or, in the case of James, directly and avowedly from the technical methods of the Franco-Russian Turgenev - Flaubert - Maupassant - Goncourt group. The derivation from the same group was as recognizable in the case of Crane though the derivation was perhaps indirect and was certainly unavowed. If we except Mark Twain, who was hardly an imaginative writer, James and Crane were the first distinctively American writers to earn the appreciation of the whole world that bothers its head about literature. They were American, that is to say, not only in temperaments but were still more marked out from other Anglo-Saxons by the enthusiasm with which they approached the technical problems that confronted them. That virtue at least has never been wanting in American writers from the days of Poe onwards.

It was not wanting in the first flight of the writers of the generation of the twenties. I do not know of any literary movement in the world in which precise and brilliant writing

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clothed such brilliant, austere and precisely rendered observations of life as those which began to pour out under my eyes in the earliest years of that decade and have ever since so continued to pour. Nor is any literature with which I am acquainted, go where I may, enriched with work of such absolute beauty of language. For me at least, English there reached its high watermark as a language both for literati and laymen. Any page of Mr. Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* is as impeccable and flawless as a vehicle for the exact conveying of what he is set on conveying as is a page of the *Code Napoléon*, his choice of words is not only exact but exquisite, his cadences are as moving as the calls of a bugle, as tender as the whisperings of lovers, as dry as the orders of a Wall Street magnate to his clerks, as musical and exciting as spring torrents.

I select Mr. Hemingway for this lyric praise —which expresses however exactly what I feel when I think of his writing—in the first place because his first writing was the first piece of middle-Western writing to come under my eyes—and what an excitement that was for me! And then he is I suppose more accepted both by writers and laymen than any of the others I have been treating of. I am as pugnacious as a proper man should be but I am at the moment set rather on exposition than breaking lances with fools and to expend extreme praise on the comparatively unknown is to have one's voice drowned in yelpings. So I am not attempting any appraisements. The praise I have given his writing as writing I would give very willingly and with equal enthusiasm to the writing of almost any member of this group.

So, when I say that *Penhally* is the best American novel that I know I need not be taken as appraising. I must not be taken as saying that *Penhally* is a better novel than *The Spoils of Poynton*, or a better piece of work than *The Red Badge of Courage* or even than *The House of the Seven Gables*. It curiously unites attributes of all those works. *The Spoils of Poynton* is an American novel about intrigues over the ownership of a historic manor-house in the English shires. Hawthorne's is a temperamentally English book dealing with a historic manor-house in New England. Stephen Crane's famous war book is almost the first generically American work of the imagination and deals with the campaigns of Northern troops in the South. *Penhally* is an American novel dealing with intrigues around an old American manor-house in a Southern state. Incidentally it brings in a raid of Confederate troops in Northern territory.

Someone said the other day that in *Penhally* the South had its *Red Badge* at last. But though the epigram may pass it obscures the truth. Both books are in contents works of masses. Ostensibly dealing with individuals their real themes are the agonies of great bodies of humanity. And though both take place in the same regions, there the resemblance ceases. As befits the work of a woman who has served a long apprenticeship to her art *Penhally*, though dealing with the tragedy of a race and the disappearance of a deeply in-bitten civilization, is a work of great composure and tranquillity. Great art is never harrowing; its emotions are large in outline, overwhelming, gradual. It is these qualities in Mrs. Tate's work that makes me reserve for her book the epithet "novel". The novel is a thing of form and of gradual but inevitable growth into that form. It is in short a classical phenomenon, a piece of slow moulding, like the Winged Victory.

Penhally is the triumphant tragedy of a house and the vindication of a mode of life. It is an achievement at once of erudition and

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of sombre and smouldering passion. It is distinguished by the afterglow of the Greek-Roman-Anglo-Saxon classicism that marked the old South off from all other lands.

> . . . He suddenly saw his father, a tall, stooped man in a suit of gray homespun, standing book in hand under the poplar tree. . . . *"Nunc te, Bacche, canam,"* he said, smiling, and bending took the glass from the boy's hand. . . .

There is the epitome of all the civilization of the old South in those four lines on the fourth page of Mrs. Tate's book. And we may find there the reason why, until right up to the present generation, the South has hardly produced any works of art . . . and why its most prominent writers of the imagination are women. The classics have this deterrent effect on their postulants: their perfectionism, when partaken of in an atmosphere of material suavity, makes all further intellectual effort seem not only useless but contemptible. So you had the Oxford don of the English eighteenth century, with his port, his shining naperies, his silver candlesticks by whose light he read Tully, Flaccus and the *Persephone Rapta.* So you had Nicholas Llewellyn's father who in the first years of the nineteenth century emigrated from overcrowded Virginia to a then new South, in that wilderness built Penhally, and there, after that effort, sat under his poplar tree, read Virgil, drank juleps that were brought to him at intervals by a little Negro, and put upon his estate the entail that was eventually to bring Penhally to humiliation. For, in the end it became a Northern millionaires' country club.

Penhally is thus the epic of a house and its fugitive generations of inhabitants. It is an epic, not what it is fashionable to call a saga, since the doom is pronounced in the first few words. It is a novel, not a book of fiction nor a piece of "literature of escape", because it is so constructed that every word of it leads on to the appointed end. Its themes are woven and interwoven, the story progresses forward in action and back in memory so that the sort of shimmer that attaches to life attaches also to the life of the book. Just as you may be a little vague as to the men and women who attended on your youth so you may be a little vague about the innumerable names of Llewellyns of Penhally, of Rosemead or of Virginia. But the figures themselves are alive, passionate, sombre, intolerant, foolish or weak. And against the strong shadows and coloration of the past the present, as it should be, seems a little dim. That is how Nemesis redresses the balance against ages like ours. We cannot build real houses or disfigure or seek to humiliate the houses that better building ages have left us. We seek by every means to obliterate the past, but leave no traces of ourselves. And certain ages of the past rise from oblivion and continue to outlive us.

The period covered by the term the Old South is one of such ages. Mrs. Tate has made it live again. *Penhally* differs from other historical works which are written from the outside and are at best *tours de force*—more or less cold re-constitutions. It unites itself to the living school of autobiographic writers in that it is a piece of autobiography. Mrs. Tate has from her earliest days so lived herself into the past of her race and region that her whole being is compact of the passions, the follies, the exaggerations, the classicisms, the excesses, the gallantries and the leadings of forlorn hopes that brought the Old South to its end. She does not have to document herself in order to evoke Morgan's cavalry raids or conditions of life amongst the slaves in the be-hollyhocked Quarters. She has so lived in the past that it is from her own experience that she distils these things.

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So *Penhally* is a chronicle of reality. It is as real as Mr. Davis's projection of Chicago, Mr. Wescott's of Wisconsin or Miss Roberts's of the migratory South of today. Her characters have none of the historic over-emphasis that distinguishes the usual romance of escape. Her Southern girls are not over-dimitied, her gallants not over-spurred, her great proprietors not over-lavish. They are in short everyday people—but people of an everyday that is not today. That is a great literary achievement—and a great service to the republic the chief of whose needs is to know how life is constituted.

I do not have to trust myself to write about Mrs. Tate's writing—which profoundly moves me. The first paragraph of her book will prove everything that I could say:

> The shadows that laced the gravelled walk shifted and flowed away between his boot soles like water. He plunged through them as a horse plunges through a shallow stream. Passing the big sugar tree he tapped it smartly with his cane. It must be rotten at the heart by this time though it did not sound hollow. It had been an old tree when little Sister Georgina—dead twenty years ago in August 1807—no, 1808—made her doll's playhouse between its roots, out of broken china and the white pebbles that lay at the bottom of the spring. The trees grew too close here. Any wind storm might send them crashing down on the roof. Mister Piper would not come for love or money in August, when people were having their cisterns cleaned. The big sugar tree would have to go, and the big poplar, and the young oak. There would be a vista then, from the dining-room windows of the house clean through to the big road. He turned to look over the lawn—a woman was crying.

I do not think that one need ask for better writing—and I do not know of many first paragraphs of novels that more skilfully get in an atmosphere. It could hardly be bettered.

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A WORD TO MR. JONES

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO "MISCEGENATION: A NOVEL" *by* H. G. W—LLS

by Hugh Kingsmill

MISCEGENATION—it's a dull, ugly, lifeless word. And altogether unintelligible, I find, to nine out of ten even of those persons who have enjoyed, as the phrase goes, a classical education. But it's imposed on me by our ridiculous archaic trick of coining a Latin word whenever we want to wrap up any fresh free provocative idea which might cause trouble if it was let kick itself loose of its swaddling impedimenta. So I've got to use the obstructive neologism, till the meaning it conceals becomes altogether too urgent to be wrapped up any longer. Blood-blending—that's all the word means; and blood-blending is what it will be called—some day.

More and more I see this mixing of different bloods as the one hope of mankind, the one sure means of subordinating the petty egoism of the individual to the service of that broader generalized being which begins already, for some of us, to take shape as the ultimate purpose of mankind. But this extension of our desires beyond the laming preoccupations of the individual self, this urge towards an impersonal, coöperative, disinterestedly creative form of existence, this splendid dream which beckons all the finer minds of our modern world—how can it ever emerge into reality, take any definite and effective shape at all, until man is *one*?

Our present rabble of nations and races, of creeds and colours—what common purpose is ever going to come out of *that*? Consider Europe alone—that hotch-pot of boreal and Latin peoples, Danes, Italians, French, English, Spaniards, Germans, splashed all over its eastern half with an ugly smear of half-orientalized Magyars, Bulgars, and the rest. Look at the lot of them, all hugging their silly little differences, hating each other, fearing each other, brandishing, each one in the next fellow's face, his own private and particular possession of speech and habit and creed. And then imagine a Europe inhabited by a single type! Look at the brown men—all that swirl and tangle of Hindu, Mussulman, Moor, Arabian, Persian. Suppose there was only one brown man, a compendium of all that's best in his colour, best physically, best mentally, best, too, morally. Or the yellow men. Figure to yourself a synthetic Mongol.

I am of course aware that this classification of whites and browns and yellows is unscientific. No one with the merest smattering of ethnology would accept it for a moment. But I am not talking ethnology here. I am quite deliberately ignoring it, aiming, indeed, with an altogether shocking disregard of ethnological terminology at the intelligence and purpose of the man in the street. For Mr. Jones the world is divided into white men, brown men, yellow men, and niggers. Here and now I speak to Mr. Jones in the language he understands. My immediate purpose is to interest him in the broad general outline of the Problem of Miscegenation. The

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details, all those vast interlacing ramifications of racial groupings, with their attendant confusions of political, sociological, economic, and religious complications, must wait for my next book, *Miscegenation and the Millennium*, the foundations of which are already being laid by a group of fellow-workers, each one a certificated expert in the particular aspect involved—eugenics, anthropology, climate, statecraft, food production and distribution, religion, and so on.

The Problem of Miscegenation I have just called it, but I am minded to give it another name, one with sap and spring and colour in it. The Adventure of the Perfect Man—that gets my meaning and purpose more clearly, and gets it with a quite immeasurable intensification of stimulus and appeal. The Perfect Man—for that indeed is my aim, and my hope; and those lesser perfections I've been talking about, white, yellow, brown, those separate fusions, are but the essential preliminaries to that crowning perfection, that final fusion, which is the only possible alternative to the ultimate shipwreck of mankind in an ocean of blood poured from its own veins. It is going to be a long business. I've never been one to believe in short cuts. It may take a thousand years. Two thousand. Ten thousand. All that's irrelevant. The business of a link is to connect up with the links to each side of it. To hold fast. Not to snap. How long or how short the chain may be—that is not at all the link's affair.

This vast enterprise of miscegenation, of controlled, purposive, scientific miscegenation, as opposed to the present haphazard affair of accidental propinquity and the purely personal urge, has got to make its beginning somewhere. Europe, I think, still leads the world; and on the whole I am inclined to believe that the first Fusion is going to be the European one. I do not overlook the possibility that America and the Colonies may join in with us, but there are immense difficulties in the way of that, and in these earlier stages I see a quite definite advantage in utilizing for their own ultimate destruction the jealousies and emulations of the transition phase. It might be altogether the best thing which could happen if America took the lead, and shamed Europe into activity with the Perfect American. Or if Japan jumped in, and turned out a Chino-Jap which would make the rest of the world gasp. But forecast here is impossible—and unimportant. Somewhere, somewhen, by someone, the enterprise will be set going. That is certain. And with that certainty we must, for the moment, rest content.

But once set going, how will it work? What will be the Method of Miscegenation? The big things are always the simple things, and, in its broad general outline, the Method of Miscegenation will prove no exception to this rule. The subordinate details are another matter. *They* will require the finest adjustments, the most delicate previsions. . . . But in this hasty adumbration of my main thought, this simplified Word to Mr. Jones, I am not at all concerned with the details. It's the Idea I want to make clear. And so, at one stride, I place myself where I can look down upon a Europe in which the initial obstacles of inertia, and prejudice, and suspicion have been overcome. A Europe all aflame with a single-souled resolution to try miscegenation out. Forthwith a tract of land will be reserved, in some not too populous area, some gracious expanse in Transylvania, maybe, or central Sweden, of wooded hills and laughing streams, and wide pasture lands and smiling fields of corn. Thither, as soon as the original inhabitants have been expropriated, with all due consideration and solacing indemnities, will troop the Volunteers,

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those splendid and beautiful and courageous Young Ones, who have heard and understood. Who feel in their blood and bodies the passionate urge, the overmastering claim, of selective breeding. The best of every nation in this continent of ours will be there—and only the best. I see the shining ranks of this great new Army of Life. I see the calm proud faces of the men, the grave and tender eyes of the women. . . .

Volunteers. But Volunteers who have by one supreme and final act of volition stripped themselves bare of every self-originating impulse and desire. For this Army of Life, as I have called it, will be wholly and utterly subordinated to the direction of its Leaders. And its Leaders will be the very élite of the Miscegenation Movement. A picked band of stark, fearless, devoted, one-purposed experts, handling the material at their disposal, that warm, human, palpitating material, with a single eye to results. Driving their experimentings with a fine ruthlessness clean through the ancient prejudices, the old obstinate inhibitions and obsessions of mankind. Here mating perfect strangers, there parting inappropriate lovers. And always, and in all places, visiting the least impulse of rebellion, the faintest stirring of recalcitrancy, with—Death.

I jump five hundred years, six, seven, eight hundred years, and lo! out of this laboratory of Selfless Sex there emerges the Perfect European. In his shining eyes there is a question, over the poised perfection of his body there runs a ripple of expectation. Then with a little sigh he understands. His Mongol Mate is still in the crucible. The bride from America yet hovers on the verge of fusion. . . .

A word about the blacks. I have deliberately excluded them from my Plan of Fusion. For two reasons. Firstly, because all the weight of available evidence goes to show that they are, in both their main groupings, the African, and the Oceanic, quite decisively inferior to the other accepted divisions of mankind. I do not believe that they have anything of value to contribute to the Final Fusion. I am very much inclined to fear that if we let them in they will damage it in some altogether fatal and irretrievable fashion. And I have another, an even weightier reason for keeping them out. We humans are in a manner the trustees of Evolution. We alone of the animal kingdom so far have grasped the purpose and the process of that great upward thrust from the slime of inorganic matter. To break the continuity of that thrust would be foul treason to our brothers. Man, the master mammal, may not without unbearable shame cut himself altogether loose of his humble kinsmen. In this splendid upward soaring of his he must leave the Black Man behind, for a model and a stimulus. That, as I see it, will for ages yet to come be the Black Man's function and opportunity. To beckon the ape and the orang across a not too hopelessly impassable gulf of difference. To quicken the nerve of Progress in the baboon. To touch the night of the gorilla with the first faint promise of the Dawn. . . .

And now where does this novel of mine come in? What particular quality of prelude or explication does it carry as contribution towards this business of getting Miscegenation on its feet?

It is written, this story, quite simply as a warning. It makes not the faintest pretensions to be a Work of Art. It is, indeed, much more like a Tract. Well, there are worse things than tracts. Most works of art, for example. But a Tract must have a moral. Let me explain the moral of mine. Always hitherto in the story of mankind against the white dream of statecraft there has flamed the red dream

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of desire. Always the big constructive ideas, the tense splendid handling of gigantic problems, have got themselves tangled and enmeshed in the warm individual things, have begun to sag under those purely personal stresses, those needs and urges of the separate self. Have—finally—collapsed. That will not always be so. Already we emerge. But before we begin to build the Future, we must understand the Past. And so I have thrown together this story as a kind of illustrative sample of all the blunderings and follies and egoisms which have made of Miscegenation in the past a thing of mockery and a shame. I see this story as a signpost, with a sprawl of indicating arms, all pointing down the wrong roads, and so helping the alert and discriminating reader, by a simple process of exclusion, to pick out the right one.

The personages of my novel bear, most of them, familiar names—Othello, Desdemona, Iago, Emilia, Brabantio, Bianca, Cassio. To me it is altogether obvious that the story of the Noble Moor and the gracious Venetian lady, which came floating up from the Mediterranean to Elizabethan England, to be promptly snapped up for his own quite legitimate purposes by that very alert popular entertainer William Shakespeare, has its origin in one of those blind, sprawling, undirected and uncoördinated thrusts towards Miscegenation, which are splashed all over the past record of mankind at every epoch of suddenly released energy and initiative. The pretty story of Jason and the Golden Fleece conceals another of these thrusts—a northward raid of swarthy Levantines suddenly desirous of fair hair. And, of course, the rape of blonde Helen. I could have used either of these stories. Or a dozen others. But Othello lay nearer to my purpose. Because, firstly, of my impatience with the snobbish artificially-sustained cult of Shakespeare which still swirls its obfuscating fogs across the perspectives of the youthful mind. I don't wish to be misunderstood. I love Shakespeare. His sweet rich verbal harmonies are delicious to me. But I have no sort of tolerance for the public-school Oxford-and-Cambridge game of discovering profundities in him. The man was not an original thinker even for his own contemporaries. He has no message for us at all.

It is, indeed, with a sense of making a long overdue contribution to the plain realities of modern life that I substitute a significant forward-reaching Othello for Shakespeare's throwback to the Old Man of the tribe, roaring his possessive ecstasies and rages over his female belongings. My other, and much more important, reason for using Othello is because his world, the world of the Renaissance, is, in its exploratory gropings and flounderings, a kind of unfinished preliminary sketch of our present world. Where we walk, it stumbled. . . . And so, without making any excessive draft on the credulity of my readers, I find myself able to lend Othello a half-conscious prevision of the scope and purport of Miscegenation. I have made that prevision shine all through his splendid wooing and winning of Desdemona. A glorious beacon. Quenched thereafter to a marsh-light, a flickering ineffectual will-o'-the-wisp, in all those lesser, random, misdirected skirmishings, those delicious, alluring, but essentially superfluous passades, with Iago's Emilia, and Cassio's Bianca, and the housekeeper of Brabantio, and the Girl from Corfu, and the Lady of Larnaca, and the Doge's niece. And the others.

Quenched, perhaps, but never utterly extinguished. . . .

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CHRONICLE AND COMMENT

It is not generally known that the first published writing of Willa Cather and Dorothy Canfield Fisher was a short story in which the two authors collaborated. It was written at the University of Nebraska when Miss Cather was an undergraduate and Mrs. Fisher, daughter of a professor in the university, had not yet begun college work. The story was called *The Fear that Walks by Noonday*, and appeared in the undergraduate literary magazine in 1895. It had lain forgotten in the files these many years when an enterprising book dealer came upon it a few months ago and, of course, immediately set about capitalizing the commercially valuable discovery of a first edition with two such well known names. But when he communicated with the two collaborators he struck an obstacle: the authors who had later done such distinguished work in literature were naturally reluctant to have a forgotten and extremely youthful effort (the story had dropped completely from the minds of both) dredged up at this late date and added to their "works".

Fortunately they were in the hands of a book dealer with scruples: he at once dropped the project which could easily and quickly have netted him a substantial sum. But then it was realized that someone else might discover the story and might not be so considerate. The authors and the bookseller agreed that the best plan was to issue the story in a very small edition and thus "destroy" its first-edition value, making it extremely unlikely that the youthful indiscretion would ever rise to plague its innocent creators. Accordingly an edition of only twenty or so copies was issued, and promptly bought up. We have not read the story, which mingled football and the supernatural; we are willing to take the word of the two authors and the friend whose copy we saw that it was pretty awful.

* * *

Last summer we read with interest that there was to be an American hook-up for one of the British Broadcasting Company's broadcasts of the song of a nightingale. Promptly on the hour we were at a radio, and

IRIS BARRY

The English novelist and motion-picture critic, now resident in this country, who wrote "The Ezra Pound Period" in the October "Bookman".

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OSCAR WILDE AS A CHILD

A photograph given to Sommerville Story by Robert Ross, and published for the first time in "Oscar Wilde: A Study", by Patrick Braybrooke.

sat enthralled as the marvellously melodious sound came over the Atlantic, the memories of the English poets around us:

. . . the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

The self-same song that inspired Keats and so many others to music no less beautiful. For days we exulted to our friends over the rare experience. But our enthusiasm was somewhat dampened when we came on this paragraph in a newspaper:

The B.B.C. have received many congratulations on the success of their countryside nightingale broadcasts, particularly during the past year. It is now revealed that the nightingale's song was, on many occasions, a counterfeit. When the bird was not in form, the B.B.C., to avoid disappointing the fans, used a portable phonograph and reproduced a specially made disc, manufactured by a famous British recording company.

Did we hear a nightingale or a phonograph record?

Another question arises: shall we ever actually hear a nightingale? The proper circumstances are reported to be difficult to secure with any ease and comfort. We are reminded of Plutarch's anecdote about Agesilaus: "Being invited once to hear a man who admirably imitated the nightingale, he declined, saying he had heard the nightingale itself". Perhaps, when we are in England sometime and are invited to join an excursion to the dripping April woods in search of a nightingale, we shall decline, saying, "We have heard an excellent phonograph record

OSCAR WILDE IN ROME

A picture taken shortly before his last return to Paris.

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of the nightingale, excellently broadcasted across the Atlantic and very satisfactorily transmitted by our Atwater Kent machine".

"The Waves"

The late Arnold Bennett has long had the effect on Virginia Woolf, it is only too obvious, of a red rag on a bull. She has charged him again and again, worried and tossed and trampled him. It is impossible to read *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown*, or the essay on Modern Fiction in *The Common Reader*, without hearing a note in them almost of panic. For all Mrs. Woolf's assurances of esteem and even pity, it is plain that Bennett was to her far more than a wrong-headed, misguided fellow writer or even an irresistibly handy example of The Wrong Way to Write. He with all he stood for was the Seducer, the Enemy; he must be routed, he must be vanquished, he must be, if possible, utterly destroyed, lest all English genius to come be led astray and founder in his swamp of the novel with thirty-two sound chapters and a neat plot.

Arnold Bennett is no longer with us in the flesh, but a dead enemy whose ghost will not lie quiet in no less dreadful than any other foe, and Mrs. Woolf fights on. It is as if in the course of her long campaign she has come to convince herself that Bennett is so utterly wrong that to be right one must find his antipodes, must become his antithesis. If ever a book could be fairly said to stand for all that Arnold Bennett's books are not, that book is surely *The Waves*; it seems like a malignity of fate that it should have had to be printed on paper like any Five Towns novel, and bound in the conventional boards.

On an earlier page in this issue Mr. Edwin Muir speaks eloquently for all those who find Mrs. Woolf successful. Perhaps we may

The châlet at Berneval near Dieppe where "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" was written in June 1897. The four photographs on these two pages were lent to Patrick Braybrooke by Sommerville Story.

briefly indicate here why we do not agree. Mrs. Woolf's charge against Bennett and Bennettism is that when one of his neat, tight, workmanlike novels has been written "life" will not live in it. It is deeper than that: it is that Mr. Bennett and his kind do not know what "life" is at all. The Novel must be saved, it must be changed and altered, so that "life" may come and live in it again.

Life is an obsession with Mrs. Woolf—we are of course using "Mrs. Woolf" as she uses "Mr. Bennett", to typify a whole school, the

WILDE ON HIS DEATH-BED

A drawing made by Maurice d'Elbée, from a photograph.

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CAROLINE GORDON

Whose first novel "Penhally" is the subject of an article in this issue by Ford Madox Ford.

school that is fast raising such an iron-bound tradition of anti-traditionalism. Life for them is never something assumed as given; it is something that must be endlessly prayed for, invoked, coaxed to come and dwell among us. Because by life they do not mean the varied aspects of human living, but only sensation; and in this latest development the sensation is not for sensation's sake, as it has been for several generations of the "life" worshippers, but for the sake of the image or metaphor in which it can be cloaked. Art consists in receiving an infinite stream of sensations, and throwing them back in an infinite stream of images. No moment without its sensation, no sensation without its image —lest for a moment we forget we are alive —and "artists".

Mrs. Woolf has gone on record about life, and it might have saved her and her publishers the endless annoyance of sorting out clippings about the incomprehensibility of *The Waves* if they had quoted this paragraph from *The Common Reader* on the jacket:

"Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there; so that if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work on his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style,

Another pose of Caroline Gordon, who is the wife of Allen Tate.

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and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end."

It is in this last sentence, we believe, that the clue to Mrs. Woolf's failure may be found. Perhaps the deep secret metaphor by which each of us represents life to himself is bound to be intangible and ultimately incommunicable; but surely Mrs. Woolf's two figures give the show away. Life is not an orderly row of gig lamps, to be sure; but neither is it a shower of atoms on a shimmering envelope; if the figures have any definite meaning, surely life is *both*. Moreover the luminous halo, the bombardment of impressions, is the element that is *given* to us; while what Mrs. Woolf satirically describes as a row of gig lamps is what we *make* of it: the order, the symmetry, the willed control, the created object. Weary of the tight little order which most of us have in our lives, and which Arnold Bennett too seldom transcended in his novels, Mrs. Woolf flies to the opposite extreme and will have life and fiction nothing but a deluge of iridescent impressions. Instead of supplying a better order, a fairer symmetry, Mrs. Woolf sinks passively into the conception of life as a shower of atoms, and uses her high literary gift for the almost automatic function of translating them into images—meanwhile calling it freedom.

Often enough, when reading Arnold Bennett, one was tempted to say, "Come, come, let us leave the inventory to the housekeeper". And presently he did. But not even for a moment does Mrs. Woolf give us relief from her images. Ceaselessly they glitter and flicker and tinkle and flash. "From all sides they come, an incessant shower of atoms." Exactly: about the feet; to the knees, above the waist, the arms, the throat; high above the aching head. On the whole, rather worse than suffocating in the linen room of the Grand Babylon Hotel. . . . Eventually Bennett sent along a human being—if only the housemaid—to let you out.

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER
at Dower House. Mr. Hergesheimer's biography of General Sheridan has just been published.

Humanism in England

Most BOOKMAN readers are aware that during the years when Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More were scarcely mentioned in their own country, their reputation was steadily increasing in England and in France, so that up to two years ago they had actually received more public discussion abroad than at home. The first book devoted to expounding them was published in France, and the first book principally concerned with refuting them was published in England. European

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MARGARET E. SANGSTER
Author of "Six Women Along the Way".

interest in their work continues unabated, has in fact been increased by repercussions from this country. The October magazines from England brought two lengthy studies of the American humanists—one remarkably good and the other almost incredibly bad.

We have referred before in these pages to the articles written for the *Nineteenth Century* by Philip S. Richards three years ago, presenting careful expositions of the work of both Babbitt and More. Other articles written in the meantime have served to strengthen the impression that Mr. Richards, whom we believe to be young, is developing powers of philosophic criticism destined to play an important rôle in English thought during the coming decades. His article in the October *Nineteenth Century* is called *Humanism in America.* It is a general survey of the movement written apropos of Abraham Flexner's book *Universities.* He draws the attention of English readers to the merits of the book, but points out that the amusing pages in which Dr. Flexner exposes the vulgarities and fantastic absurdities of American educational developments do not tell the whole story. "It is in American universities that in the last few years a group of vigorous thinkers and writers has appeared who, perceiving where the real danger to modern civilization lies, have set themselves deliberately to the vitally important task of reasserting, on a critical instead of a merely traditional basis, those ethical and humane values in accordance with which the life of man, in the future as in the past, must be lived if it is to be in any real sense of the words worth living."

Mr. Richards then summarizes briefly the careers of Babbitt and More and goes on to a discussion of Stuart Sherman's tardy swing from sense to nonsense. It is a little puzzling to hear that "the history of this volte-face is interesting, because it is so purely American". As Mr. Richards says, "the turning point in Sherman's intellectual life was the war"—which was not exactly an American episode, any more than the humanitarian enthusiasm to which he succumbed, in the shape of the Wilsonian idealism, was a purely local phenomenon. Mr. Richards observes that the humanists' "bitter antipathy to humanitarianism" is at first "perplexing to the English student", and adds: "The Americans, as it happens, are right; and their timely warning may well turn out to be the most valuable part of their special contribution to the controversy of the day".

Mr. Richards lays great stress on the need for the study of the Greeks in arriving at a sound understanding of human nature, and ascribes the imperfect balance of Sherman and the weaker side of Emerson to their failure to "drink deep at the true fountain-head of humanism". No one would deny that the finest humanistic training lies in reading "Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle in the original tongue", but one may perhaps doubt that

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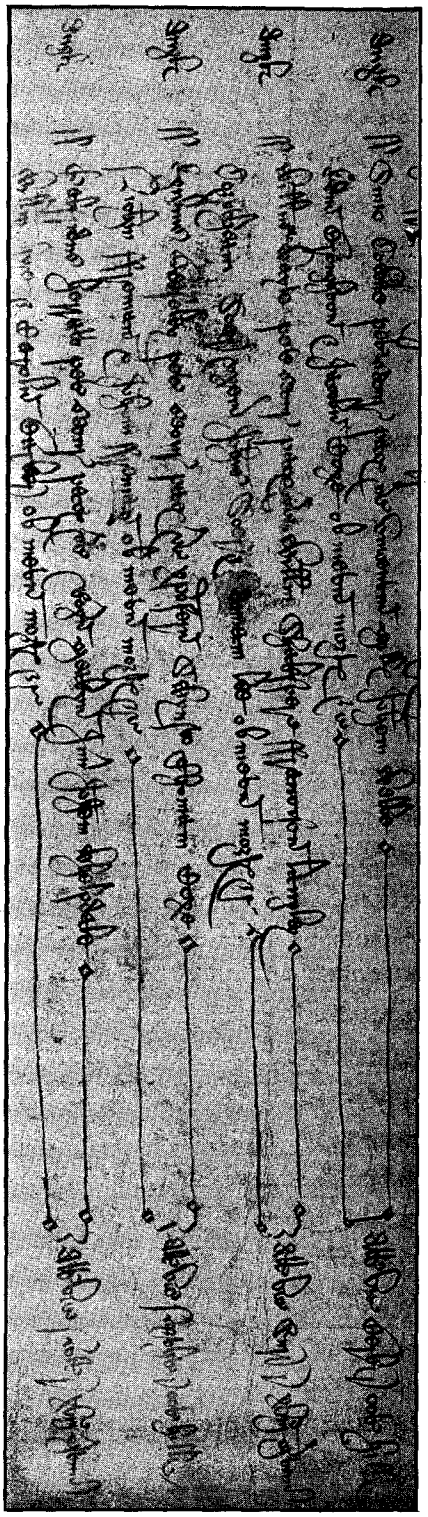
Leslie Hotson, whose "Shakespeare vs. Shallow" adds to the reputation as a literary detective which he made with his discovery of important documents in the lives of Marlowe and Shelley.



The document which rewarded Leslie Hotson's long search among the millions of papers in the British Record Office and led him to other facts and theories about Shakespeare. The second item may be translated: England Be it known that William Wayte craves sureties of the peace against William Shakespere, Francis Langley, Dorothy Soer wife of John Soer, and Anne Lee, for fear of death and so forth. (Writ of) attachment (directed) to the Sheriff of Surrey, returnable on the eighteen of (St.) Martin (i.e. November 29, 1596).

a classical education is quite such a specific against "the humanitarian illusions about human nature or the naturalistic nightmare" as Mr. Richards seems to feel. He says "A classical scholar who is also a humanitarian enthusiast is a phenomenon so rare that it might almost be described as a 'sport', a freak, a *lusus naturae*. Professor Gilbert Murray is one instance; Mr. A. E. Zimmern is possibly another; but it would be hard to mention a third of anything like the same eminence". But surely Mr. Richards is loading the dice in confining his examples to men who began as classical scholars and later became prominent in public affairs. Can he name *any* examples on the other side? We fear that the knowledge of Greek does not prevent the Lowes Dickensons and Middleton Murrys, in England, or the John Jay Chapmans and Edmund

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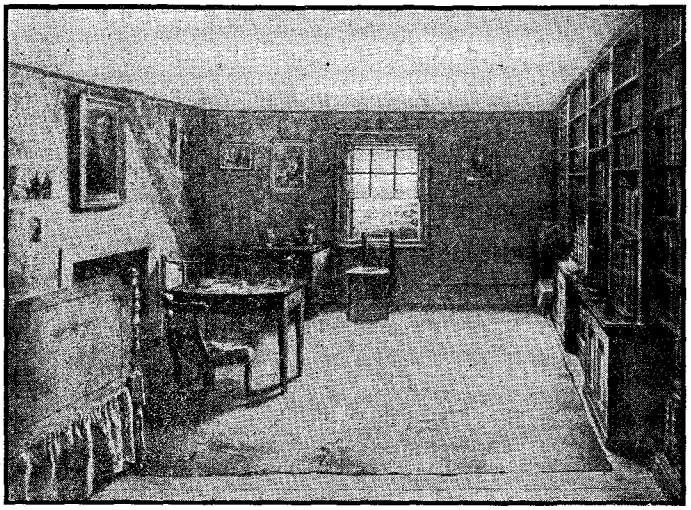

AN HISTORIC HOUSE

Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Priestley have recently bought Samuel Taylor Coleridge's house at 3, The Grove, Highgate, where Coleridge spent the last eighteen years of his life and received all the eminent literary figures of his age. On the left is an early picture of the study, which still stands just as it was, with the original shelves and furniture. Below is a view from the garden.

Wilsons, in this country, from succumbing to the humanitarian fever. But this reservation is not intended to detract from our admiration for Mr. Richards's fine study or from the value of his eloquent plea for a sound humanism nourished by the classics.

* * *

It was with keen anticipation that we turned to the article entitled *"Humanizing" America* in the October *Dublin Review*. The author's name, Michael de la Bédoyère, was unfamiliar, but of course the high standards which the *Dublin Review* has maintained for ninety-five years almost guarantee the qualities of any contribution in advance. Furthermore, in this country it has been from the Catholic writers—in *America, Thought, The Commonweal, The Modern Schoolman*—that the humanists have received their most intelligent and most searching criticism; there was every reason to expect even finer criticism in the great British Catholic quarterly.

Our astonishment knew no bounds when we discovered that the *Dublin Review* had published, had in fact set proudly at the forefront of the magazine, the stupidest discussion of humanism that has yet been printed in any country. And *that* is a superlative which was indeed hard to earn! But among all the scores of writers who poured out so many thousands of words of confused thought, of ignorance, of bigotry, of malevolence, against Babbitt and More and their followers, there was not one who failed to distinguish them from the left-wing Unitarians and ex-Unitarians like Charles Francis Potter who by an accident of nomenclature are known by the same word. Actually, Mr. de la Bédoyère has never learned that the two movements are not only utterly different,

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but diametrically opposed! And this in spite of the fact that he spent considerable time in America last year, travelling over the country, talking with many people, and reading humanist literature (and anti-humanist literature; *The Critique of Humanism* figures prominently in his piece).

It was almost unbelievable. But there it was, in his very first paragraph. "I was wandering one afternoon in a large city of the Northwest of the United States", his article begins, and describes the day as cold and snowy. "As I slid past an automobile, itself dodging in and out of a ceaseless stream of cars skidding on the icy roads, I caught sight of a poster inviting me, as a member of the public, to listen to a lecture on Humanism. Glad of any refuge, I entered the building. It was the local Y. M. C. A. center." One imagines the kind of stuff he heard. As he says, it was "a lecture on agnosticism, the spirit of science, and humanitarianism". And still he thought he was listening to an exponent of Babbitt and More!

He is vaguely aware that there is a certain difference between his Y. M. C. A. humanist and Babbitt and More, with whose work he professes to be very familiar. But he insists that this is the way their principles "filter down to the people for whom they are meant". The long article devoted to explaining how this comes about is one of the most muddled and ugly-minded exhibitions it has ever been our misfortune to read. In the end one is in doubt whether Mr. de la Bédoyère's ignorant jibing at the humanists or his unctuous patronizing of America is the more repellent.

Of course, after such a fantastically obtuse beginning, one could not be surprised by anything. It was natural that our author should rely on such sources as this: "As another professor, this time of psychology, said to me: 'It's no use talking about Humanism here; we simply won't go back' ". And natural also that he should take seriously this kind of remark: "One intelligent American critic told me that he thought Babbitt's work was a disguised defense of the rich employer". It was inevitable that he should adopt as his own several of the more peurile anti-humanist slurs of Edmund Wilson, Allen Tate, and Henry Hazlitt. There was a recognition of ultimate fitness as one came on such sentences as these: "Babbitt's idea of self-reform can only mean feathering one's own intellectual, moral and physical nest"; "More sneers at Dreiser, but Dreiser is making a real contribution to the future of America, while More is unread, unwanted".

O. HENRY AS A CARICATURIST

Robert H. Davis, co-author with Arthur Bartlett Maurice of "The Caliph of Bagdad", as pictured by the Caliph at a baseball game in 1903.

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LEWIS MUMFORD
Whose latest book is "The Brown Decades".

Mr. de la Bédoyère's delicate ear for the nuances of language never fails him; in praising the broadcast of a football game he "cannot refrain from quoting a gem", the gem being this: "Look at him picking up the ball in that crowd, as cool as an Esquimau sitting on a block of ice". Nor do his taste and his sense of propriety ever leave him. He speaks of seeing "a play which a Christian might have enjoyed, but which would surely have caused a blush to suffuse the face of a nicely poised Humanist". And he describes his Y. M. C. A. speaker as follows: "He did not look like a Humanist . . . but he did look like a man who would call himself a Humanist. Small, wizened, stooping, short-sighted, high-voiced, he smilingly blinked at his audience, and, speaking in a singsong, with studied hesitation and no notes, he was the nearest thing to an eccentric Oxford don I had ever seen outside Oxford". One immediately forms a mental picture of our author as tall, handsome, robust, straight, keen-eyed, deeped-voiced—the very image of the young John Henry Newman, gifted with his flow of golden speech, and, of course, the living incarnation of his spirit.

But enough of Mr. de la Bédoyère's rhetoric. His thinking is on the same level, and it is not worth analyzing. For the most part it is merely an unusually pretentious sample of the usual traveller's chatter about how different Americans are from Europeans: "a great race of experimentalists with an immense enthusiasm and a faith in themselves and the future". Americans, of course, are "like children"; and, of course, "this is not said with any intention of disparaging Americans—far from it". And so on, all the old platitudes, interlarded with his anti-humanistic nonsense and his painful efforts to seem "fair" to the humanists by occasionally inserting a word of praise. Babbitt's books are pronounced "learned and wise"; a compliment that rather loses its edge when one reads presently that he is inclined to think that his Y. M. C. A. humanist was "wiser than Babbitt".

Mr. Algar Thorold, the able editor of the *Dublin Review*, has done his magazine and his Church a grave disservice in publishing such an article. We note with alarm that Mr. de la Bédoyère is announced as a contributor to Mr. Francis Sheed's series of *Essays in Order*. It may be, of course, that Mr. de la Bédoyère is capable of doing work which entitles him to a place with Christopher Dawson, Peter Wust, Jacques Maritain, Carl Schmitt, E. I. Watkin, and the other able authors in that distinguished series. But until such work confronts us we beg leave to consider the possibility a remote one.

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Howlers

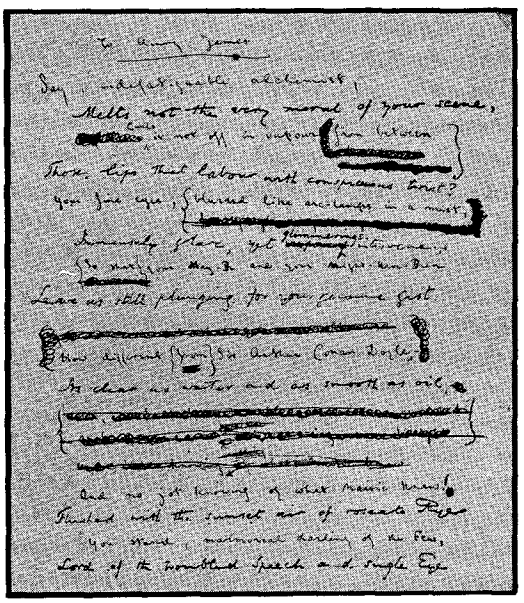
It is always a mystery to us how those typographic errors happen which seem to grow out of the printer's entering too thoroughly into the spirit of the document he is setting. Is it ever really a case of what F. P. A. captions "'*Stet!*' cried the proof room"? Sometimes the misprints are so pat and so obvious that collusion by the proof-readers seems the only possible explanation. For instance, take the book on D. H. Lawrence by Stephen Potter, published last year. One of the items in the bibliography was "1921, Sex and Sardinia". Can that really have eluded the eyes of the printers' proof-readers and the author as well?

Another amusing example occurs on page 30 of Evelyn Scott's *A Calendar of Sin,* where the context makes the omission of the "l" in "public" seem the most obvious malice aforethought.

* * *

Some other errors have diverted us recently. But perhaps we had better confess to a few of our own. There was that horrible occasion a few months ago when we allowed an author to ascribe the line "the multitudinous seas incarnadine" to *Antony and Cleopatra* instead of to *Macbeth.* An alert reader promptly wrote a letter. But somehow the letter did not come to the editor's hands: the junior editor thought the editorial assistant had shown it to us, and the assistant thought this had been done by our secretary, who in turn . . . At any rate, it was in all innocence that, on the same day that the BOOKMAN's humiliating lapse became known in the office, we saw in a show window the Star Library's *Shakespeare Complete* marked eighty-nine cents, and promptly bought it, succumbing to the lure of so remarkable a bargain and remembering that the reference shelf set was incomplete, anyway. It was not until F. P. A. quoted the blunder in The Conning Tower, some weeks later, that we learned of it—and learned that the staff had been admiring us as a model of tact and kindliness for rebuking them in no severer fashion than by placing the works of Shakespeare on the shelf.

We have never understood quite how the spellings "Gauthier" and "contesse" were allowed to mar the fine articles on translation



A sonnet "To Henry James". The alternate lines are in the handwriting of Max Beerbohm and Edmund Gosse.—From "The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse", by Evan Charteris.

by Hilaire Belloc published a few months ago. It would be small enough excuse for such obvious errors to plead that both Belloc and the Oxford University Press, whose version we used, can be trusted to know French. Actually, however, the mis-spellings were noticed by two readers in the office, and nevertheless in some mysterious way persisted into print.

But the BOOKMAN's prize blunder in French was perpetrated last year in the course of our

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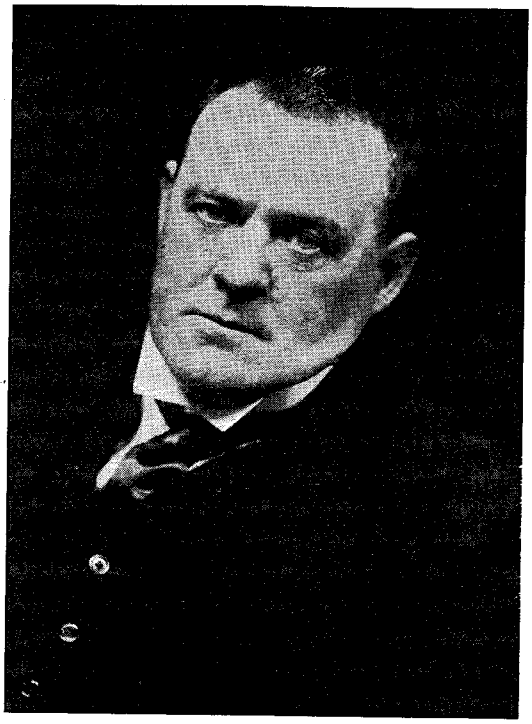
controversial articles in behalf of the humanists: we referred to Irving Babbitt as a *maître d'école* when we intended to say *chef d'école.* Now of course *maître d'école,* schoolmaster, is exactly what Babbitt's enemies are forever trying to make him appear; while *chef d'école,* leader of a movement, is exactly what they are most chagrined to realize that he is.

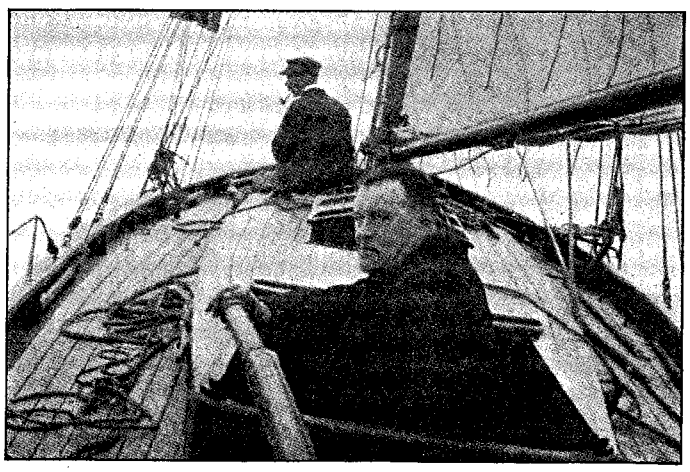
* * *

A few weeks ago in his London Letter in the *Herald Tribune* Mr. Hugh Walpole was made to refer to the author of a famous attack on the late Edmund Gosse as "Clinton Collins". Perhaps Mr. Walpole's calligraphy presents difficulties, but is Churton Collins so completely forgotten that even his name is unknown in literary offices? We should have thought that with all the limitations of his work, the power of expression and great learning he brought to controversial subjects would have kept certain of his writings alive for at least another generation—if only the attacks on Gosse and Saintsbury in *Ephemera Critica,* his book of 1901. These were veritable masterpieces of the art of slating, filled with the most deadly exposure of error after error throughout the whole range of literature. No one who read them could ever forget them, or have quite the same opinion of Gosse and Saintsbury again—least of all the poor victims, one imagines.



HILAIRE BELLOC

Collins's reputation no doubt suffers from the main circumstance of his career: he was an anti-academic academic. After his death such a writer always falls between the pained silence of his confrères and the ignorance



ABOARD THE "NONA"

Hilaire Belloc aboard his lamented sailing boat the "Nona", whose sad end is recounted in one of the essays in his new book "A Conversation With a Cat". One of Belloc's best books, "The Cruise of the Nona", is a report of the adventures and reflections occasioned by a voyage along the English coast.

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of the public. But during his lifetime Collins was not neglected. He was one of the most brilliant of the reviewers for the *Saturday Review* and the *Edinburgh Review,* as well as a scholar whose originality and forthrightness commanded attention.

We have often been struck by the resemblance between the career of Collins and that of his American contemporary, Harry Thurston Peck, the first editor of THE BOOKMAN. Peck had an even wider range of learning and interests than Collins, but was decidedly inferior to him in literary gift. The two men played very similar parts in their day, and are remembered—or forgotten—in much the same way. We should imagine that sufficient time had now elapsed for university scholars to treat both Peck and Collins objectively. Will not some student of the period set about writing the definitive paper on one or the other of them? THE BOOKMAN is eager to secure such papers.

Bountiful Belloc

It is impossible to consider the books that Hilaire Belloc publishes in any one year without being reminded of the chapter devoted to him in the first series of *Biography for Beginners,* that brilliant *jeu d'esprit* written by E. C. Bentley in 1905 which has delighted thousands and been imitated by almost as many; it is the obvious prototype of the manner which Ogden Nash has recently developed so successfully. The biography of Belloc went, you will remember:

> Mr. Hilaire Belloc
> Is a case for legislation *ad hoc.*
> He seems to think nobody minds
> His books being of all different kinds.

Three books by Belloc are on the autumn lists. One is a solid biography of Cranmer, the third in his series of studies of the great clerical figures of the Reformation, following Richelieu and Wolsey. The two other books are essays, *A Conversation With a Cat* being in his lighter vein, the vein of informal causerie in which he has no equal for charm and richness and variety; and *Essays of a Catholic* representing him as the militant propagandist of Catholicism, probably the most effective of his generation. Earlier this year Belloc published *The Man Who Made Gold*, a novel-length fantasy with observations on economics, cult-worship, and a variety

A photograph of Hilaire Belloc at the beginning of his career. Reproduced from "The Bookman" of July, 1899.

of topics; and *New Cautionary Tales*, a return to the delightful nonsense verses of 1907. This list leaves out the sizable study of the art of translation which appeared in the September and October issues of THE BOOKMAN and has now been issued as a booklet by the Oxford University Press. Incidentally, Belloc has nearly as many publishers as he has books, the books mentioned being distributed among Harper, Lippincott, and Macmillan; a bibliography of his seventy or eighty books would contain almost a complete roster of English and American publishers.

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CLEMENCE DANE

Whose "Broome Stages" is the subject of an article in this issue.

Another peculiarity of Hilaire's
Gives literary editors gray hairs.
Why can't he settle down and not jump any
More from company to company?

(Only unfortunately he pronounces his name *Hilary*.)

The year 1930 was comparatively thin for Belloc, yielding only three books: the biography of Wolsey, a satirical mystery-story called *The Missing Masterpiece*, and a beautiful recounting of the life of Joan of Arc. 1929, with five books, was more like him. There were two works of fiction, *Belinda* and *Shadowed!* (Belloc's titles sometimes suffer a change for the worse in crossing the ocean; *Shadowed!* was called *But Soft—We Are Observed* in England. And would that Putnam had not changed his *Economics for Helen* to *Economics for Young People*!) The same year saw a book of essays, *A Conversation With an Angel*; a masterly survey of the whole battle-line of the Catholic Church called *Survivals and New Arrivals*; and the biography of Richelieu.

And so on. Even these three years with their fourteen books fail to give a full cross-section of his work. Five of his main fields —history, economics, politics, warfare, and travel—were not represented at all. And in calculating the volume of his work it should be remembered that a large proportion of his incessant writing for *G. K.'s Weekly, The Universe, The Week-End Review* and other magazines remains uncollected. Philip Guedalla has very nicely hit off Belloc's variety and volume in a chapter of *The Missing Muse*, a fine appreciation only slightly marred by the fundamental antipathy of the two men's views and by Guedalla's acceptance of the prevalent fallacy that Belloc has an anti-Semitic prejudice. Guedalla's portrait, called "Mr. Belloc: A Panorama", begins:

> Is it (perhaps it is) a discourtesy to tell Mr. Belloc that there are too many of him? His name is, so to speak, a collective, but scarcely a generic, noun; and the public mind, which is rarely equal to recognising a performer in more than a single part, begins to reel a little. For he is not only a prophet, but a procession; and the effect upon the patient observer, as he moves across the contemporary scene with the stamp and thunder of a stage crowd, is sometimes a trifle confusing. One feels that there are moments when, even for himself, he must create something of a traffic problem, when there is a hold-up at his cross-roads, as one of him goes by and blocks the way for all the others.
>
> First, of course (and one feels sure that he would put him at the head of that marching column), there is a lyric poet, who plays airs of singular restraint and regular time in defiance of the best—or is it the worst?—contemporary models. This slight and wistful figure is followed in the line by two totally distinct varieties of poet. One of them, a

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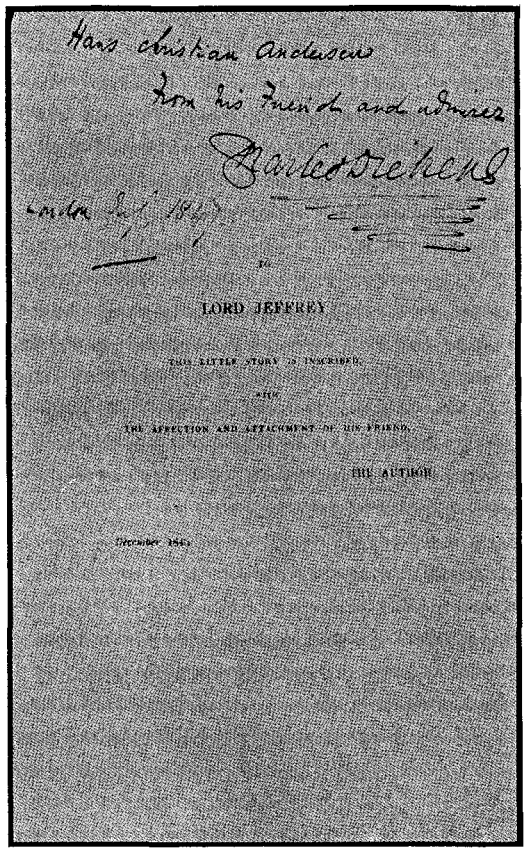
noticeably stouter gentleman, persists in roaring drinking choruses with a strong geographical bias in favour of villages in Sussex; whilst his friend, a thin-lipped, almost a morose person, dispenses rhyming satire about dons and public men. As those accomplished poets, Mr. Belloc, strike their diverse lyres, a whole crowd of old friends (what a nest of singing birds he is) goes with them—a patient mediævalist, an *amateur* of guns, a skilful epigrammatist, a passable master of the ballad—and of the *ballade* as well—and an accomplished (but, if the truth is to be confessed, a dullish) sonneteer as well. Then, four abreast and swinging down the road, come the serried files of prose-writers. A journalist elbows his way to the front and, sometimes a little shrilly, denounces public men for being Jews and Jews for the same offence; a historian of unusual eloquence declaims gravely upon the Revolution with a slight, but noticeable, French accent; a geographer makes little sketch-maps of Roman roads and mountain ranges and compares notes with the historian; whilst a well-known expert upon the art of war expounds the elements with the explanatory air of a determined teacher putting a particularly awkward piece of trigonometry to a deaf pupil of limited mathematical attainments. There is a novelist or so in the procession, a notable pedestrian, and even (for nothing human is, within Nordic limits, alien to Mr. Belloc) an economist. A slightly erratic politician denounces stray abuses with an exquisite gift for personality; and somewhere down the line an essayist follows the casual curves of his irregular course. But one feels that he is rather looked down on by others as a literary man. So, with a happy burst of marching-songs and statistics and drinking-songs and devotional music and diagrams and sketch-maps, they all swing past in the sunshine; and as the happy crowd goes down the road, one is left staring a little ruefully after them into the dust.

I make no pretence that this Homeric catalogue is exhaustive. If, as they say, you do not see in the window the article that you require, Mr. Belloc has probably got it somewhere inside. I have omitted an artillery-driver, a considerable archæologist, the patient editor


Hans christian Andersen
from his friend and admirer
Charles Dickens
LORD JEFFREY
THE AUTHOR

Dedication page in the presentation copy of "The Cricket on the Hearth" with Dickens's inscription to Hans Andersen, who inspired the story. From "Fishers of Books", by Barton Currie.

of Mr. Lambkin's *Remains,* and the voluble encyclopædia which once vociferated its way down the *Path to Rome.* Mr. Belloc has not yet, so far as I am aware and patient enquiry avails me, written an opera. But it would surprise none of his admirers to learn that he was engaged on one. For one may count the art-forms which he has never practised and the branches of learning which he has never professed on the fingers of one hand. This terrific multiplicity of interests, which alarms a feeble generation, belongs to an earlier, braver age. We are accustomed to the narrow claims of the specialist, that depressing ignoramus. Mr. Belloc belongs to the older, wilder species of Men (as they used to be called) of Letters, learned men at large in the universe

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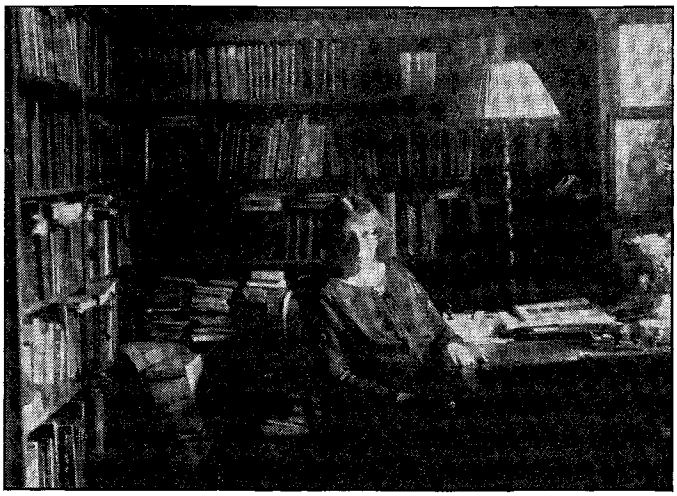

SIGRID UNDSET

Photographed in the study of her farm Bjerkebak, at Lillehammer, Norway. Fru Undset's new novel "The Wild Orchid" is reviewed in this issue.

with a mind, a general education, the habit of cheerful dogma, and—better than all—a style.

* * *

It has been a pleasure to see with what unanimity the English reviewers of *A Conversation With a Cat* have emphasized the fine prose style with which Belloc adorns his slightest middle article. So much of his work, especially in later years, has been on controversial subjects from an unpopular point of view that the critics have tended to lose sight of the fact that as a stylist Belloc stands in the first rank, with a highly personal medium adaptable to many moods, from airy improvisation to high eloquence or grim indignation.

A Conversation With a Cat contains one piece of bad news for Belloc-lovers: the *Nona* is no more. In a paper of exquisite delicacy, *The Death of the Ship*, Belloc tells of the passing of the little boat in which for many years he sailed along the coasts of England and France. "The other day there was a ship that died", he begins. "It was my own ship, and in a way I would it had not died. But die it had to, for it was mortal, having been made in this world: to be accurate, at Bembridge, in the Isle of Wight, nearly sixty years ago." The *Nona*, it seems, "was of sound tradition and family, the ninth of her family, and perhaps the last", and "her lines were of the right sort, belonging, as they did, to the day when England was England". But toward the end of her life she had had to be patched and repatched with increasing frequency. "The expense was nothing. We will always pay for doctors when it is a matter of those we love. But off the Norman coast the other day she gave me that look which they give us before they leave us, and she started a plank." With difficulty she delivered her passengers ashore, lay up on the mud, and died. "Very soon she with hammer and wedge was dissolved into her original elements—all that was mortal of her—and the rest is on the seas of paradise. I wish I were there—already: now: at once: with her."

The little ship that died was the scene of one of the best of all the Belloc books, *The Cruise of the Nona*. Why has this never had the popularity it deserves? All Belloc fans, constant or occasional, know *The Path to Rome*, but few seem to know the later book which rivals it in charm and surpasses it in solid substance. In *The Cruise of the Nona*, published in 1925, Belloc poured out his ma-

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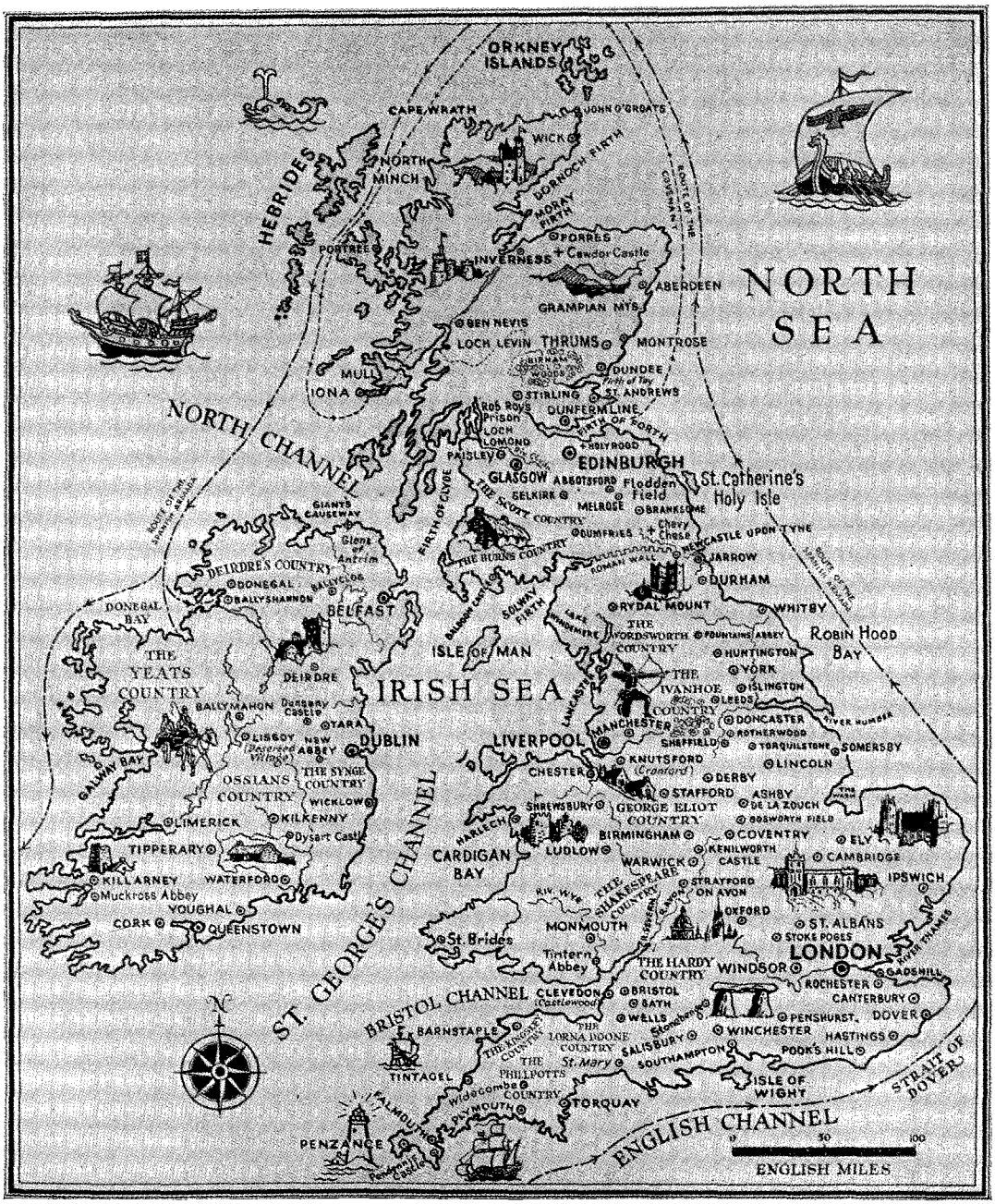

A LITERARY MAP OF THE BRITISH ISLES

from Edmund Kemper Broadus's "The Story of English Literature" (Macmillan), an informal text-book full of interesting pictures and quotations, affording an attractive combination of instruction with literary enjoyment.

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ture reflections on a wealth of subjects and produced one of the richest of modern books. If the Houghton Mifflin Company is thinking of following the admirable example of Dutton's in republishing old books that have never reached their full public, we urge them to consider *The Cruise of the Nona*. A year or two ago the English publishers reissued the book in a low-priced edition, but the paper is so thin that the reading is difficult.

* * *

Belloc dedicates *A Conversation With a Cat* to J. B. Morton, a humorist who writes a daily column in the London *Express* under the name of Beachcomber and has recently collected his column material into a book, *By the Way*. He is not exactly a "new" humorist, since his column has been a popular newspaper feature for five years or so, but the publication of his first volume serves as a more substantial indication that another fine writer of humour has arisen in England. *By the Way* will probably not be published in this country—it is too slight, too local, too topically journalistic. But lovers of English humour will not want to be without it, and will be convinced by the rich, effortless gaiety and sanity of its manner—in spite of much unevenness—that J. B. Morton is a man to be watched. It is hardly fair to make a single item represent a whole book of short bits, written in many moods; nevertheless we quote one of Beachcomber's series of "Parisian Memories":

> So Van Dongen is to have an exhibition in London. Well, well! Van Dongen, with whom I used to take a *bock* at the *Vache qui Chante*, while Gornowicz expounded Cubism, and Fracas, the poet, recited his verses to the waiters. In those days I lived with Vaurien on the floor of a *charcuterie* in the *Rue des Saltimbanques*, and when we had *deux sous* we used to dine off a *petit pain* sent us by Mère Cauve, from the *boulangerie* next door.
>
> Slotz, the Belgian, was one of us, and Siliani, the painter, and La Saperlipopette, the dancer. What days! What days!
>
> And now Van Dongen is famous and the old *Chèvre qui Murmure* is an auction room, and nobody goes to the *Mirliton*.
>
> They were good days, and we were really bohemians. "Dong", as I called him then, and I used to dine often on a *bouteille de vin rouge* and a *croissant*—he fresh from his easel, I in an interval between two articles for the *Revue de Jeudi*. Sometimes "Pic" (Picasso), and "Mo" (Modigliani) would *joindre* us, bringing their own *soupe*.
>
> Once "Dong" stopped me on the *Pont Léopold XXXVI* to tell me he had sold a

ANDRÉ MAUROIS AND MADAME MAUROIS

in their newly decorated home in Paris. The decorations are by Dim. Photograph by Jean Collas.

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peinture for *trois francs*. We went off to the *Brébis qui Tousse* to *célébrer*, and lived on the *argent* for two weeks. *Ma Foi!* as Apollinaire used to say, *"C'est merveilleux!"*

It is pleasant to look back on those brave times.

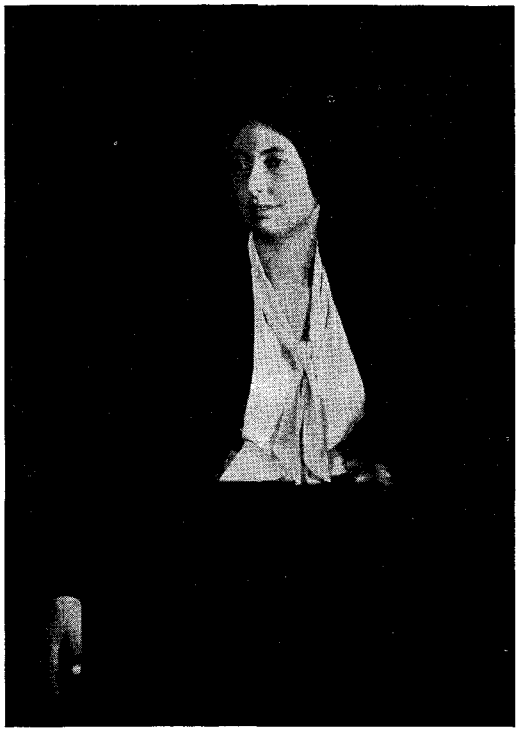
There was Souris, with his flashing brown eyes and his loud laugh. He mixes now with the world of rank and fashion, but in those days we had but one hat between us—a brimless straw—and when it was raining we used to toss up for who should go and buy the *petit pain* for the night's supper. It was Souris who threw a kipper at a *gendarme* in the *Place Ridicule*. All this was, of course, before his *"Bonsoir Mariette"* was produced at the *Comédie Française*, and brought him fame and fortune.

Others who frequented our set in those days were Henri Culotte, Rostand, "Pif", Bourget, Mirbeau, Camille Ducart, France, Matisse, Monet, Manet, Minet, Munet *et* Menet, *vous savez*. What days! *Quels jours!*

* * *

J. B. Morton, incidentally, is one of the brilliant group who have been brought together in the new incarnation of the *English Review* and are making it, we venture to assert, the most important monthly in the English language. The *English Review* has had numerous vicissitudes since Ford Madox Ford founded it in 1911 in order to publish a poem of Thomas Hardy's which all the magazines and papers in the country had refused on the score of immorality. Ford's brilliant régime lasted less than two years, when the magazine was bought by Alfred Mond and moved steadily from experiment and innovation toward conventionality. In recent years it has been thought of as a rather dull paper of conservative leanings.

A few months ago the *English Review* was taken over by the publishing firm of Eyre and Spottiswoode and the editorship entrusted to Douglas Jerrold. The June issue was the first to show the work that had been going on behind the scenes. Apparently Mr. Jerrold has devoted great ability to making far-reaching plans which are now bearing fruit: in a few issues he has, as we have said, advanced the magazine to the very forefront, and there is no doubt that before long its influence will begin to be strong. The *English Review* is still an organ of conservatism, but with a difference: Mr. Jerrold is an able representative of that "revolutionary" conservatism which is the one new and invigorating force in the world today, the movement of intelligent counter-attack against the tendencies towards excess and disruption which have for so long driven all before them. He is aware that communists and capitalists are joining hands to become the really reactionary party, the party of big business, mass production, machine efficiency, scientific naturalism



MARGARET KENNEDY

Whose novel, "Return I Dare Not", is reviewed in this issue.

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—that the proletarian state is the same thing whether it is run by a hidden plutocracy or (more smoothly) by a public party with dictatorial powers; while the true radicals are those who are setting themselves against industrialism and proletarianism by an insistence on the primary human facts, on the rights and duties needed to preserve the individual in dignity and liberty.

Thus to describe the new *English Review* is in part to do it injustice. For one thing, while we believe the above to represent Mr. Jerrold's direction in politics and economics, not all the contributors seem to agree with it: several of them hold in the old-fashioned Tory manner "that in the maintenance of our existing system lies the only hope for the future of the country and of our people as a whole . . . the system under which every civilized state has lived and progressed for thousands of years", etc. Again, it is unfair to suggest that all the magazine is taken up with serious discussions of politics and economics. There has been brilliant satire and humour from such writers as Hugh Kingsmill, J. B. Morton, Douglas Woodruff; fine philosophical criticism from Arnold Lunn and Christopher Dawson; a wealth of stories and poems; a superb survey of foreign affairs by Sir Charles Petrie. The reviewing section fairly rivals that of the *Criterion*; T. S. Eliot, indeed, is one of the reviewers. We quote the opening of Herbert Agar's review of Theodore Dreiser's *Dawn*: "For years Mr. Dreiser has been fumbling about, seeking the most sordid and distressing subject for a book. At last he has found it, for *Dawn* is the first volume of an enormous autobiography".

We salute the new *English Review* and the magnificent staff of contributors Mr. Jerrold is gathering about him and inspiring to their best work.

* * *

M. A. De Wolfe Howe is preparing a volume of the letters of James Russell Lowell. For some reason Lowell's large correspondence has remained uncollected hitherto—a surprising gap in the American literary record, that the most eminent critic of his century should be so incompletely available to the student or the lover of fine writing. The letters will hardly add any important novelties to our knowledge of Lowell's career, but they should serve to round out our picture of one who touched the lives of his times at many points, and will no doubt provide a document of high value. They should also be useful in making the new full-length study of Lowell that so badly needs doing, now that the values for which he stood are coming to be more widely appreciated. Aside from Ferris Greenslet's little book of 1905 and the literary estimate of Joseph J. Reilly (1915), there has been no book on Lowell since H. E. Scudder's volume of 1901.

Mr. Howe has issued a request that possessors of unprinted Lowell letters send him their material for possible inclusion in his collection. (He may be reached at 26 Brimmer Street, Boston). Mr. Howe is best known, perhaps, for his study of Barrett Wendell, which received the Pulitzer prize for biography in 1924. He has also written lives of Phillips Brooks, George Bancroft, Bishop Hare, James Ford Rhodes, and has edited the letters of Charles Eliot Norton.

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THE MAKING OF "THE SCARLET LETTER"

by Julian Hawthorne

In his portrayal of the Salem Custom House, introductory to the romance *The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne describes with particularity "a certain affair of fine red cloth, much worn and faded, with traces of gold embroidery, greatly frayed and defaced, but wrought with wonderful skill of needlework. On examination, it assumed the shape of a letter—the capital letter A". And he adds, "It shall be freely exhibited to whomsoever may desire a sight of it".

The Scarlet Letter is a work of pure fiction; and this paragraph not less so than the rest—more, if anything. But Hawthorne, when he wrote it, was still "the obscurest man of letters in America", in his own opinion, and didn't expect to be taken seriously. So he was amused and somewhat embarrassed when enquiries began to come in from an interested public, concerning that "affair of fine red cloth", and some earnest persons even wanted to know if it was for sale, and at how much.

Had it existed, and been preserved till now, no doubt it might fetch a fair price,—more, certainly, than did the Romance itself. In view of the appetite for such relics, it is surprising that some enterprising collector hasn't forged it out of whole cloth. Such things are done. I have personally visited in Salem an edifice asserted to be the only real and original House of the Seven Gables; it stands on a certain Salem street, and has at least seven gables; though the general plan of the structure is quite different from the one described in the book,—which, moreover, Hawthorne himself depicts in details obviously irreconcilable with this apparition; and, in the preface to that volume, warned no doubt by his previous experience, he is at pains to declare that the House, and the Street and Lot on which he places it, never had any concrete reality.

But denials were vain: the Public is and has ever been that way. It prefers forgery to fact. My father, in the bosom of his family, has often chuckled over its obstinacy—which, after all, is a sort of left-handed compliment to the excellence of the fiction-writer's imagination. No cloth-and-needlework scarlet letter, however, has as yet been put forward; but there is opportunity in the future. By the way, I was lately in contact with a gentleman who, in the fervour of the moment, said he would pay Twenty Thousand Dollars, cash or certified check, for the original manuscript of *The Scarlet Letter*, to him in hand delivered. I was obliged to decline; not from any foolish pride of possession, nor because no such manuscript had ever existed; but because my father, after he had written the thing, delivered it to young Mr. James T. Fields, who, not to be too late for the Spring Book Market, promptly passed it on to the printers; and they, after they had set it up, dropped the sheets into the waste-basket, or used them for pipe-lighters. I have heard Fields, in later and wiser years, bitterly lament this indiscretion. But the rash deed was committed four-score-and-one years ago, and is irrevocable.

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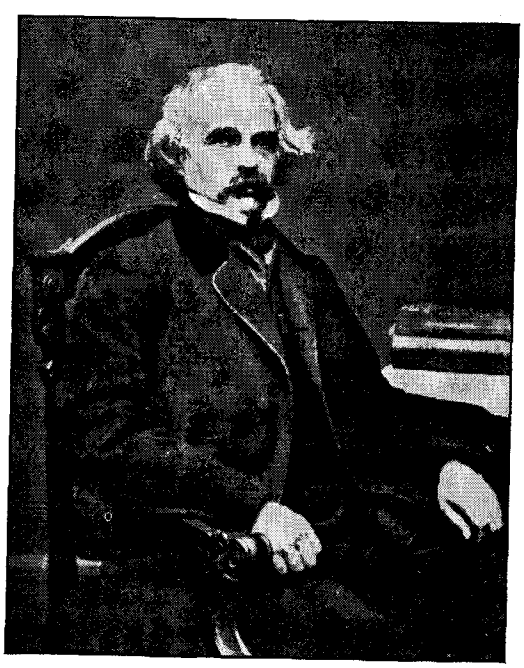
Possibly the eager virtuoso mentioned above, before making his proposition, may have been aware of its futility. Nevertheless, it was a gallant and eloquent gesture, and helps the trade.

Samuel Johnson wrote his *Happy Valley* in order to raise money to pay for his mother's funeral. The election of General Zachary Taylor to the Presidency of the United States brought about the writing of *The Scarlet Letter*. My father had been for several years holding down the post of Surveyor of the Salem Custom House, his profession as story-writer having been found inadequate for the support of his recently acquired wife and two children. But he was an old-line Democrat, whereas the good old General Zachary was a Whig; and Politics are Politics. So Hawthorne suddenly found himself out of a job, with no material on hand for pursuing his former industry. His stories had never been very remunerative, but he had no other means of making a living, and he had been unable, during his Surveyorship, to provide against the present unexpected stringency. There was, indeed, a story of sorts lurking in the back of his mind; but stories take time to write; and what were he and the family to subsist on in the meanwhile? Butcher and baker must live, as well as authors. The author of *Twice-Told Tales* and *Mosses from an Old Manse* was in a quandary.



Nathaniel Hawthorne.

But his wife—good woman and far-seeing housekeeper—had the answer to the riddle locked up in her private drawer. While her husband sat troubled at his desk, she unlocked this secret hoard and poured it out before him on his desk—real cash money, the sum of her unsuspected economies of several years past, amounting to—well, hundreds of dollars! "Now," said she, "you can write that Great Romance!" So the cloud turned its silver lining; and we may imagine the little domestic scene!

But birth-pains go with works of genius; and Hawthorne remarked, looking back upon the writing of *The Scarlet Letter*, that he had undergone a great severity and diversity of emotion. Hawthorne's mother, a woman now approaching her eightieth year, came to live with her son; she was in infirm health, and needed care. The house in which he dwelt was on Mall Street in Salem, and was, I think, the property of the Mannings, an ancient Salem clan. She had been Miss Manning before her marriage with my grandfather. The house was three stories high, but only one room deep. Hawthorne was using the attic room as his study; below was the guest-chamber, with the great four-post bedstead on which generations had known birth and death. Beneath that were

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the family living-rooms; and the entire edifice, including the front and back yards, with a tree or two, served as play space for the children, whose activities left no region unvisited, except the study, and even that was not always exempt.

Old Mrs. Hawthorne, a venerable and somewhat awesome figure, was established in the guest-chamber, and she spent much of her time on the great bed, there awaiting the end, with her age-long thoughts and memories. She had been a widow for forty years, her husband having died at Surinam while on a voyage to the East Indies. She was taciturn and reserved, though kindly at heart; she had been a beautiful young woman, and deeply attached to the handsome young ship-captain, who had sailed away, never to return, after becoming the father of two girls and a boy who was named Nathaniel after his sire. Ever since her husband's departure she had dwelt in strict seclusion, chiefly in the Union Street house near the docks, built by a Hawthorne ancestor about the time of the Revolution. It was the custom of New England widows to retire from society for a year or two; but Elizabeth Manning Hawthorne's withdrawal had been for ever. She was seldom seen outside her bed-chamber until her infirmity brought her to her son, and to the skilful and tender care of her daughter-in-law.

Of course the children—Una, six years old, and her brother, four—were asked not to make too much noise, and the guest-chamber was closed to them, though they would peep in now and then when the doctor came on his visits, and contemplate the austere shape on the bed. Overhead sat the author at his half-finished page; and the wife and mother, an incarnate beneficence, ever attentive to all needs. When spring and summer came, the youngsters could be outdoors more, though they were not encouraged to pass into the public street. And Death, as all knew, was drawing daily nearer. The children didn't know what Death was, except that it was a solemn and sacred prelude to Heaven, and they were full of curiosity.

In that atmosphere was the book begun, and it is no wonder if its shadow fell upon the pages.

The bearing upon the making of the book itself of such attendant circumstances prompts me to follow them a little further.

Hawthorne's marriage had brought him happiness, and, during the first years, had hardly interfered with the seclusion of his bachelor's existence. But with the return to Concord of the owners of the Old Manse, he had to move his family to Salem, and spend some hours of each day at his Surveyor's desk in the Custom House. In the afternoons he would be back in Mall Street, and sought no other society. Imaginative writing, in such conditions, was not practicable; but stories could form in his mind, and might be shaped and coloured, perhaps, by what was around him. And the life of his own growing children offered colour and novelty in plenty.

In the little story called *The Snow Image* appears his first use of this domestic material, planned before the writing of *The Scarlet Letter*, his little daughter Una serving as model for the leading figure. Una was his first child, and she inherited much of his genius, though not his literary gift: but there was mutual understanding and companionship between them, and he watched with loving interest her nature and blossoming. And it happened that his mother's decline and death shed new light upon the child's character.

There is a mystery in unspoiled childhood rooted in the primal depths of human nature;

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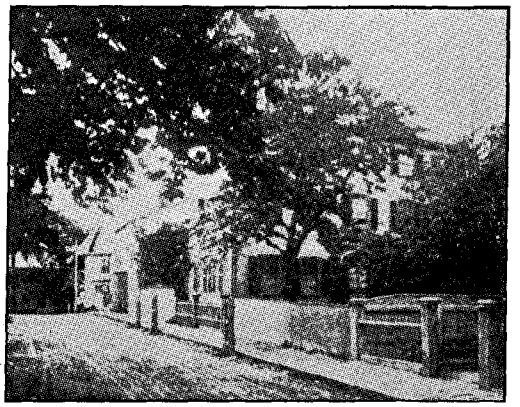

The Mall Street House where Hawthorne wrote "The Scarlet Letter" while his mother lay dying.

because, whatever its outward or accidental conditions, its inward qualities derive from sources reaching back into the unsearchable past, passing the boundaries even of personality. Later, these may be modified or obscured, and the individual man or woman supervenes. Occasionally, rare endowments are developed, and there appears a Sappho, Caesar or Shakespeare—an epoch in history. But none can foretell what ancestral vice or virtue may lurk beneath infantile innocence, to be fostered or obliterated by the chance of the future. As the old Bishop said of the criminal, "There, but for the grace of God, go I". Heredity is strong, but it may prove not omnipotent.

Una was, no doubt, the subject of her father's profoundest meditations. She was the daughter of peace, happiness, and love; but Hawthorne, in his great Romance, was sounding the depths, where interweaving of threads of good and evil could not be denied. The child Pearl, in the story, is the offspring of passion, shame, and rebellion. In his imaginative study of her he could hardly fail to profit by the insight which love had given him into the nature of his own Una. Wide apart in genesis and environment though they were, they might be sisters in the depths.

It chanced, singularly, that the child of his imagination and she of reality were side by side before him at the same time, and the latter supplied substance to the other, as may be seen by comparing jottings in his private note-book with passages in the story; though whether or not he himself was conscious of the echo can only be conjectured. I shall give a few extracts presently.

It was a New England July, very hot: all doors and windows open for air, and Una and her small brother everywhere pursuing their avocations and enacting their dramas. All children are dramatists, and they make their dramas from the scenes and events around them. Hawthorne's children—Una especially—were highly imaginative, and found endless material in the mysterious and solemn affair going on in the shadowy guest-chamber; they were reverent, but insatiably curious, and therefore the more observant; and they couldn't help making a play of this theme of the Approach of Death, and enjoying and occasionally laughing over their histrionic success. It was imitation, but the spirit of art was in it, and artists, creating through sympathy, are naturally pleased with their creations. What was remarkable here is that Hawthorne never sought to check their lightsome, innocent mockery of the tragedy in which he himself was involved. He comprehended their viewpoint, and would not interfere, though their fun might be his torture. A word or gesture would have silenced them; but he forbore.

Here is a page from the note-book: "Una, during the Doctor's visit, has been in the grandmamma's room, and describes her to Julian: 'Oh, you don't know how sick she is,—as sick as I was, when I had that fever!' What a contrast between that childish illness and these last heavy throbbings—this funeral

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march—of my Mother's heart. . . . Una is infinitely adventurous, and spends much of her time, in this summer weather, hanging on the gate, and peeping forth into the great unknown world that lies beyond. Ever and anon, without giving us the slightest notice, she takes a flight, and when we seek her, we find her surrounded by a knot of children, with whom she has made acquaintance, who gaze at her with a kind of wonder, recognizing that she is not altogether like themselves.

"She has been in the room again, and describes grandmamma's sickness to Julian, who is riding his hobby-horse, and had wanted to go too: 'Oh, it would be too painful for you to see; for she is very sick indeed, and sometimes she almost cries, but she is very patient with her sickness.' Julian presently assumes the character of his mamma, and addresses Una as Julian; but in the midst of the scene both are suddenly transformed into other characters—Una into a lady, and Julian into a hackman: now, for a moment, they become themselves again; they shift from one semblance to another faster than ever Proteus did. They live themselves into everything that passes under their notice,—showing what strong impressions are made on young and fresh susceptibilities.

"Half past two:—They are playing with a hen which often comes into the yard: a living plaything is infinitely the most interesting to a child. Anything that can move of its own volition has a hold on their sympathies. Now the hen is gone: Julian bemoans himself at the gate, Una comforting him: 'Little Julian shouldn't cry for the hen, when God gives him so many good things'.

"At about five o'clock I went to my mother's room, and was shocked to see such an alteration in her. I love my mother, but there has been, since my boyhood, a sort of coldness between us, such as is apt to come between persons of strong feelings if they are not managed rightly. I did not expect, just then, to feel the struggling of any overpowering emotion,—though I knew that I should deeply remember and regret her. But I was moved to kneel down close by my mother and take her hand. She knew me, but could murmur only a few indistinct words. Then I found tears slowly gathering in my eyes—I tried to keep them down, but could not—I kept filling up, till for a few moments I shook with sobs. For a long time I knelt there, and surely it is the darkest hour I ever lived. Afterwards I stood by the open window, and looked through the crevice of the curtain: the shouts, laughter and cries of the children came up into the chamber from the open air; and I saw my little Una, of the golden locks, looking very beautiful, and so full of spirit and life that she was life itself. And then I looked at my poor dying mother, and seemed to see the whole of human existence at once, myself standing in the midst of it. . . . At this moment Una's voice came up very clear and distinct into the chamber,—'Yes, she is going to die'.

The Old Manse. From a woodcut made in 1857.

"July 30, 10:30 A.M.—My mother still lives, but seems scarcely sensible. Una can hardly

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Sophia Hawthorne. From a painting by C. G. Thompson, in Mr. Julian Hawthorne's possession.

be kept out of the chamber: this is partly intense curiosity of her active mind, partly, I suppose, natural affection. But there is something that almost frightens me about the child—I know not whether elfish or angelic, but at all events supernatural. She steps so boldly into the midst of everything, shrinks from nothing, has such a comprehension of everything, seems at times to have little delicacy, and anon shows the finest essence of it: now so hard, now so tender; now so perfectly unreasonable, soon again so wise. I now and then catch an aspect of her in which I cannot believe her to be my own human child, but a spirit strangely mingled with good and evil haunting this house.

"Julian is now on the couch as sick grandmammer, Una waiting on him, showing perfect knowledge of how it should be; he with a twinkling smile on his rosy face, not looking the character very well. But it all recalls the scene of yesterday to me with frightful distinctness; and out of the midst of it, Una looks at me with a smile of glee."

Here the record stops: old Mrs. Hawthorne died the next day.

The plot of *The Scarlet Letter* need not be recounted here; indeed the general outline is as old as either History or Fiction: the Lovers, the Husband, the Community. But in Hawthorne's treatment of it there are special features.

Prolixity was never his habit; and here he has left out that part of the story on which a conventional novelist would chiefly have dwelt. We are given but a glimpse of the ancient English home of Hester, the heroine; of the visit of the elderly scholar; of his winning the consent to be his wife of the beautiful and gifted girl, ambitious to see and know the world from which her parents' poverty had debarred her; of the sojourn at the antique Continental city where the husband must tarry for a while to wind up his affairs, his young wife proceeding meanwhile to the New World beyond the Atlantic, to become a distinguished figure in the primitive settlement. But the husband does not rejoin her there, being, as afterwards transpires, delayed by shipwreck and captivity among Indians in the South. But Hester's social position is eminent, and in particular she makes friends with the Clergyman, the eloquent and saintly young English graduate, Arthur Dimmesdale. He is reputed to walk with God, and Hester beside him.

In all this is abundant material and colour to fill the first of the customary three volumes of the Victorian novel of Hawthorne's day. But, beyond a few retrospective paragraphs, the story begins with the emerging of Hester Prynne from the prison door, with her misbegotten baby in her arms, and the Scarlet Letter on her breast. Not only has the first of the three volumes been omitted, but the second also, which would have contained the impassioned details of Hester's seduction; and nothing remains for the reader but the two hundred and fifty brief pages devoted to

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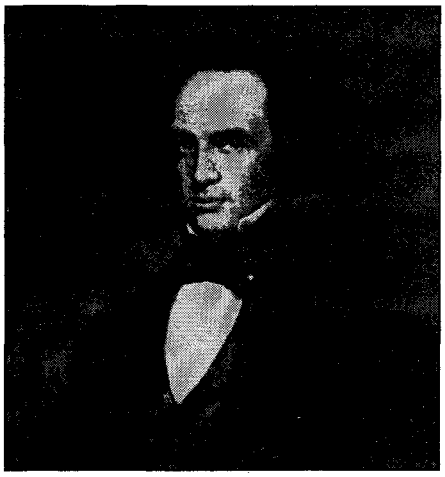
the consequences of the lovers' misdeed. Few novelists would have undertaken the work on those terms, and Hawthorne himself, after finishing the manuscript, laid it aside with the remark that it was too gloomy to succeed. And had not young Mr. Fields happened to call at that juncture, a chief star might still be lacking in our literary galaxy.

Of course the plot required not only the lovers and the wronged husband, but also the child whose birth revealed the sin. This element in the drama might have embarrassed most novelists—as well as the parents—and Pearl, as her mother named her, might either have conveniently perished betimes, or been kept in a pathetic and featureless background. The idea of making the little creature, in her own right, the most vivid person in the scene would hardly have occurred to any one but Hawthorne, and perhaps not even to him, except for the tragic domestic atmosphere in which he wrote, and the suggestions inadvertently supplied by his own little daughter. Pearl appears as the Scarlet Letter itself embodied in flesh and blood; and this child of his imagination could not have been so poignantly portrayed had not Una, the offspring of happy reality, been constantly in his sight and thought during the composition of the story.

Accordingly, Pearl, in the present analysis, takes precedence over the other characters—which are, indeed, powerfully conceived and drawn, but are not unique conceptions. Roger Chillingworth, the husband, plots a revenge far from commonplace—the murder not of his enemy's body, or even of his holy repute in the community, but of his soul—thus unawares transforming himself into a demon, while his intended victim, through public confession at the last, opens a door to Divine mercy. But Chillingworth is only an illustration of Hawthorne's belief, not seldom apparent in his writings, that the intellect is tragically incompetent to understand and deal with the vital problems of the human soul. Hester, again, is a figure of epic stature and dignity, such as Aeschylus or Sophocles might have conceived, and yet with tender human traits that may touch the heart of every lover and mother. Of Dimmesdale, the author remarks that his aspect expressed both extreme nervous sensibility and a vast power of self-restraint—a character, in the circumstances, pregnant of calamity. The life and death struggle of three such persons would suffice for the interest of any drama; but had the fame of *The Scarlet Letter* depended on these alone, the book might have had its day of recognition, but not its enduring fame. The best minds of the period perceived its rarity and eminence; and Oliver Wendell Holmes chose his words well:—



Hawthorne at thirty-six. The Thompson portrait, a companion piece to that of Mrs. Hawthorne.

> I snatch the Book, along whose burning leaves
> His Scarlet Web our great Romancer weaves.

But not only are the proportions of the structure obedient to art, but the seeker penetrates

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to arcana of human nature which other adventurers have passed unseeing, or have forborne to follow to the end. And it is characteristic of this writer to find his clue in a sinless child.

In his shorter tales it had been his practice to depict persons and events less for their concrete than for their spiritual significance, and thus to indicate the coherent meaning underlying the external chaos of existence: to make the seen the vehicle for the unseen. But this method, as he remarks, alienates all but those "gentle readers" who are prone to accept the writer's point of view. Accordingly, in his longer narratives, his figures and scenes are allowed to gain substance and vividness, while the motive remains spiritual. Perhaps only Shakespeare has been uniformly successful here; but Hawthorne, in *The Scarlet Letter*, and especially in the delineation of Pearl, not seldom satisfies the test.

Pearl, however, also claims another qualification. It occasionally befalls the composer of a drama that a being steps upon his stage unforeseen. Breaking thus into the prearranged program, she seizes the reins, usurps authority, and becomes predominant, and the others comparatively inert: she appears vital and independent; they must conform to the statutes, while she is a law unto herself.

Creation is always miraculous, though we apply the word loosely; but Pearl is a quasi-miracle. Hawthorne accepts her as the pith and purport of his theme, and with unflinching and unerring touches bodies her out before us. She is no extravaganza of fancy; even in her wildest manifestations we feel her justification; yet to Hester, her mother, whose passionate defiance of law human and divine she embodies, she often appears enigmatic and appalling. Hawthorne, brooding over the apparition, sees her revealed as a form of independent life. Of the other characters there might be prototypes, but where of Pearl? The question brings us back to his own little Una.

We have seen with what intensity her father had observed the child; and now that the realities surrounding his own mother's death had passed he was free to follow the personages of his fiction. And after the half-admitted reason that caused Hester to remain near her unsuspected lover's abode, Hawthorne turns his eyes on "that little creature, whose innocent life had sprung, by the inscrutable decree of Providence, a lovely and immortal flower, out of the rank luxuriance of a guilty passion. . . . Man had marked the sin by a scarlet letter so that no human sympathy could reach her. God, as a direct consequence of that sin, had given her a lovely child. Day by day Hester Prynne looked fearfully into the child's expanding nature, ever dreading to detect some dark and wild peculiarity that should correspond with the guiltiness to which she owed her being".

But—"The child was worthy to have been left as the plaything of angels after the world's first parents were driven out of Eden, —a native grace which does not invariably coexist with faultless beauty. Her aspect was imbued with a spell of infinite variety: throughout all however a trait of passion, a depth of hue, never lost, which did not more than fairly express the properties of her inner life. But her nature lacked reference and adaptation to the world into which she was born. She could not be made amenable to rules. In giving her existence, a great law had been broken, and the result was a being whose elements were all in disorder, or with an order peculiar to themselves, recalling what Hester herself had been while Pearl was imbibing her soul from the spiritual world and her bodily frame from its material

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of earth. . . . However white and clear originally, the rays of the infant's moral life had taken the deep stains of crimson and gold, the fiery lustre, the black shadow, and the untempered light of the intervening substance. Above all, the warfare of Hester's spirit at that epoch was perpetuated in Pearl, —the defiant mood, the flightiness of temper —now illuminated by the morning radiance of a young child's disposition, but, later in the day of mortal existence, might be prolific of storm and whirlwind".

Still deeper:—"A certain peculiar look, so intelligent, yet inexplicable, so perverse, sometimes so malicious, but generally accompanied by a wild flow of spirits, that Hester, at such moments, could not help questioning whether Pearl was a human child. She seemed rather an airy sprite which, after playing its fantastic sports upon the cottage floor, would flit away with a mocking smile. It invested her with a strange remoteness, as if she were hovering in the air, and might vanish at any moment".

Hawthorne with his publishers, at the height of his fame.

Again:—"What a happiness, could Hester have heard her clear, birdlike voice mingling with the uproar of other childish voices of a group of sportive children! But this could never be: Pearl was a born outcast of the infantile world. An imp of evil, emblem and product of sin, she had no right among christened infants. And she comprehended that destiny had drawn an inviolable circle around her: if spoken to, she would not speak again: if children gathered about her, Pearl would grow terrible in her puny wrath, snatching up stones to throw at them, with shrill, incoherent exclamations, like a witch's anathemas in some unknown tongue".

In spite of her rejection of human companionship, however, Pearl was not lonely. "The spell of life went forth from her ever creative spirit, and communicated itself to a thousand objects, as a torch kindles flame wherever applied. Her one baby voice served a multitude of imaginary personages, old and young, to talk withal. It was like the phantasmagoric play of the Northern Lights. This might be little more than was observable in other children of bright faculties: the singularity lay in the hostile feelings with which Pearl regarded these offspring of her own heart and mind. She never seemed to create a friend, but always to be sowing broadcast the dragon's teeth, whence sprung a harvest of enemies, against whom she rushed to battle."

Once more—we have seen how Hawthorne, looking into the bright summer sunshine from the window of his dying mother's chamber, saw his Una there, very beautiful, and so full of spirit and life that she was life itself, and heard her voice come up very clear and distinct into the chamber—"Yes, she is going to die!" And now, in the book, after the colloquy between Roger Chillingworth and Dimmesdale, they heard "the clear, wild laughter of a child's voice proceeding from

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the adjacent burial-ground, and beheld Pearl and her mother passing along the footpath. Pearl looked as beautiful as the day, but was in one of her perverse moods, and, coming upon the broad, flat tombstone of a departed worthy, she began to dance upon it. Old Roger Chillingworth, looking from the window, smiled grimly down. 'What is she? Hath the imp any discoverable law of being?'

" 'None: save the freedom of a broken law,' answers Dimmesdale. 'Whether capable of good, I know not'."

This idea recurs to Hawthorne ten years later, when pondering the crime of Miriam and Donatello:—"The foremost result of a broken law is ever a wild sense of freedom". But in the case of Pearl, it leads him to interrogate the essential nature of Evil as a fundamental condition of human life. Pearl, in this light, is not in herself hateful, and the impulses which riot in her possess a sort of intrinsic beauty. A sinless infant, she yet stands as a dominant and fearless embodiment of sin, possessing the earth in her own right: not as a usurper or rebel, but as a lawful sovereign, justly making war against the good: viewing herself as the sole real good, and justified, as such, to destroy all adversaries. She has no regrets, no compunctions. To her mother's morbid fancy, the child always appeared as the Scarlet Letter incarnate, the embroidered token being but the hint thereof; but Pearl is the terrible yet lovely reality, not affixed to a garment, but rooted in the soul; passionately loved, yet feared; a demon, yet irresistibly adorable. Her mission is to subdue the world to her own likeness, or to destroy it.

Her argument is that of Lucifer and his angels in their revolt against Heaven. And could evil instead of good be the final law and condition of mortal creatures, we can imagine a new, diabolic splendour in existence, such as is shadowed forth in the biblical symbol—the sons of God looking upon the daughters of men, and finding them fair. An appalling conception, of a Satanic Divinity and Eternity! The sole (but sufficing) protection against the victory of Sin is in the infinite quality inherent in man's soul. Sin, to the sinner, always appears sweet and delightful—the only real and desirable good—else temptation would be a futile fable of logic. But inasmuch as there can be no limit to the demands of selfhood, till at last we say, "There shall be no other God before me!" internecine warfare becomes inevitable, and the human race would annihilate itself. Therefore the everlasting bounds to revolt are set, and if we fail to rise to the height of mutual love, universal murder or suicide becomes the only alternative. Meanwhile, it is the deadly hostility of every self-seeker against every other that begets the pains of hell; an ignoble punishment, but no other is conceivable.

Thus it appears that the lovely and lovable manifestations of a real human child may, by its enigmatic suggestions, lead a faithful seeker to the discovery of a Pearl. Mere abstract musings or unaided invention might not have created a figure so alive and undeniable. So Thor, in the Scandinavian legend, attempts to drain the goblet offered him by the Giants of Jotunheim, but finds that it is connected with the fathomless ocean. Hawthorne, contemplating what was nearest and dearest to him in the world, finds himself treading on the threshold of Eternal Mystery.

But for the key put in his hand by my little sister Una, and for the mood induced by his own mother's illness and death, he might not have adventured so far. And had he been less an artist than he was, the conception of an infant demon might easily have led him

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into some extravagance of characterization. Hawthorne, in his most radical speculations, is temperate, and this reticence more powerfully conveys his thought. The story of *The Scarlet Letter* is not merely the portrayal of a striking episode; it is the fearless but reverent rendering of a phase of the eternal conflict between the selfish and the social forces in human life. As he comes to his concluding pages, the author inclines to the more hopeful view; and, on a stage so boundless, we may agree that it is wiser to pardon than to condemn.

But though Pearl is the soul of the book, she is the insurmountable obstacle to its translation to the stage. In a talk I had with Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, between two acts of *Love's Labour Lost*, she—warm and glowing from her Beatrix—spoke ardently of her desire to enact the part of Hester Prynne: —"Oh, to be Hester in that scene where she tears off the Letter from her bosom, in the forest, and casts it away!" And then she turned to Irving, "And what a Dimmesdale you would be, Henry!" And she urged me to attempt a stage rendering.

But the wise Irving knew better, as had my father, two generations before: "You could be Hester, but who would be Pearl?" It is an old saying, "*Hamlet*, with Hamlet omitted". In fact, the attempt has more than once been made, and has inevitably failed. My father had suggested, however, that it might succeed as an opera; and certainly it is full of solemn music. But a Beethoven is needed to write the score.

FAULKNER OF MISSISSIPPI

by Marshall J. Smith

SUNDAY morning down in Oxford, Mississippi, I found William Faulkner bottling beer in the kitchen. I had come to see the author who had impressed the critics with *The Sound and the Fury*, had been discovered by the intelligent public in *Sanctuary*, and had been surrounded by a chorus of praise as his stories appeared in magazines and his earlier books were reissued—a new luminary in the South, in the very darkest part of the South. It was Faulkner, but not the man I expected. I was looking for an author whose interest was in idiocy, rape, suicide and a lost gentility. Instead I found another William Faulkner. He was squatting on the floor beside a cracked churn siphoning scummy homebrew out through a piece of hose into second-hand ginger ale bottles. Sam, his neighbour, was helping him.

Nick Pappas in the café at Oxford had told me about this Bill Faulkner. He was Murry Faulkner's oldest boy. He went fishing and liked to hunt. He was the man the corner garage owner said was "farmin' an old place an' doin' some moh of that smart writin' ". But surely this was not the author of *Sanctuary*. The man who wrote that mas-

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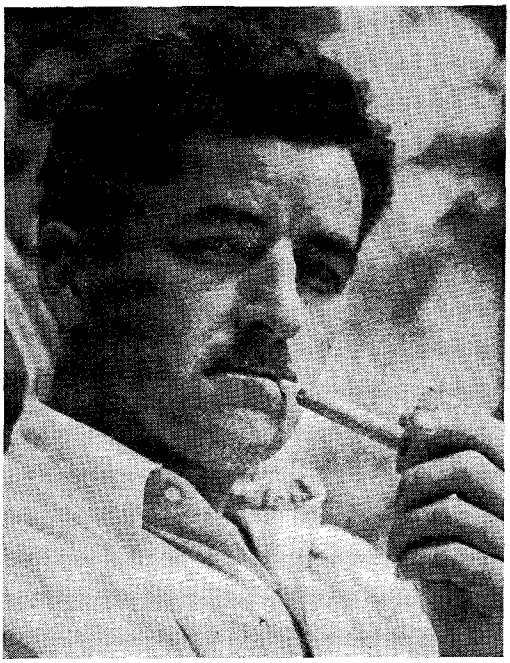

William Faulkner

terpiece of realism could not be this unshaven, amateur beer-maker.

Sam went on with the beer. Faulkner lighted his pipe and considered the first question I asked after an introductory explanation.

"Born?" He restated the query to get set for his smart-crack. "Yes. I was born male and single at an early age in Mississippi. I am still alive but not single. I was born of a Negro slave and an alligator, both named Gladys Rock. I had two brothers, one Dr. Walter E. Traprock and the other Eagle Rock, an airplane."

This was Faulkner's barrier, the hazard he places about the sensitive part of him that can create such novels as *Soldiers' Pay*, *Mosquitoes*, *Sartoris*, and *As I Lay Dying*. On the surface he was a young Mississippi farmer who didn't mind bottling beer in his kitchen on Sunday. I had to turn elsewhere to learn that he had been born in Ripley, Mississippi, in October, 1897, and that several years afterward the family moved to Oxford where stood the University supported by the state. When he entered the University, of which his father was treasurer, he was enrolled as a special student, but after two years he quit to join the Canadian Flying Corps.

I watched the last of the muddy homebrew drain into a bottle while on the back porch a barefooted nigger stared at fuzzy young cats as he mumbled something to Faulkner about "two bits" being needed "foh cawn meal". The man shuffled off in the dew spinning a quarter in the air. Carrying several pitchers of the new brew we walked out under the shade of cedars that were planted for the admiration of a plantation mistress in 1830. There at a table made from young willows we found rough chairs and conversation.

As Faulkner stood for a moment before sitting down in front of the old house, now gray and rotting but once a white mansion, I recalled the description of Bayard Sartoris who lived "where the dusk was peopled with ghosts of glamorous and old things. And if they were just glamorous enough . . . then they were sure to be disastrous". The phrase "glamorous fatality" seems at times to cloak Faulkner.

But Faulkner is not walking about in a veil of heavy tragedy with the poison cup of Socrates in his hand. While to the critics Faulkner is a figure to be compared with the Russians and is termed a "genius" and one who "writes like an angel", he gives the impression that he is much more interested in where the catfish are biting and how to keep rabbits out of his field peas.

We talked and smoked. We talked of Mississippi politics and of mutual friends in Memphis, where the chief action of *Sanctuary*

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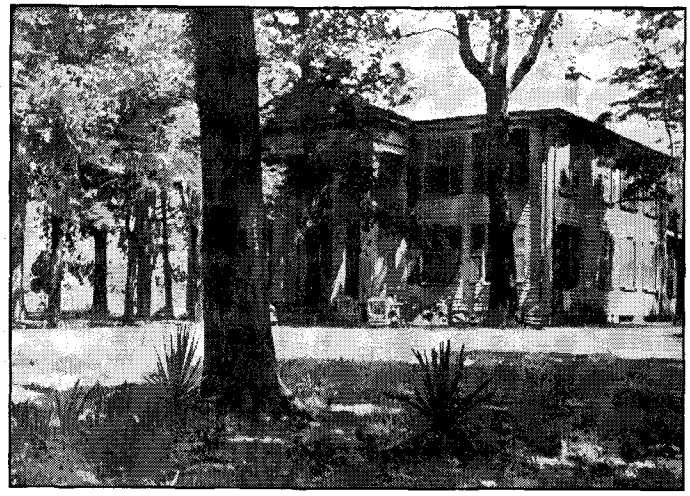

SANCTUARY

William Faulkner's home in Oxford, Mississippi. A two-story frame building in a grove of cedars, erected about 1830 as a plantation home. Today it has lost its white gloss and stands as a relic of the South's glory—rejuvenated with plumbing and electric light.

takes place. The iced pitcher moved about. Gradually the man who created the idiot Benjy in *The Sound and the Fury*, Miss Jenny in *Sartoris* and the sensational Popeye in *Sanctuary* came to sit at the table. Faulkner, the artist, emerged from behind the mask of a Mississippi gentleman.

I asked him about his motive—why it was so hard to understand portions of his books—just what was he trying to convey?

Another view of Faulkner's house, showing the south-west wing which Faulkner uses as a workroom. The two big window open into a high-ceilinged room that was once the parlour. A rough typewriting table, a filing cabinet and a chair make up the furniture. The floor is littered with guns, hunting boots, and paper.

Faulkner relighted his stained cob pipe and sighed at such questions. "Folks try too hard to understand. The public expects too much of present-day novelists. Read a book and let it go at that. You can read it in two days. It takes months to write one. If you can't understand it after reading it, then forget it. Your time and the author's time have been wasted. If a story is in you, it has got to come out. If you have something to say—you can write it—in fact, you have got to write it."

This inner compulsion to give himself to writing may explain why a novelist of the first rank today prefers to live in the small Mississippi town of Oxford—the original of Jefferson of his novels—and why he has no intention of living elsewhere.

"I haven't written a real novel yet," Faulkner confessed. "I'm too young in experience. It hasn't crystallized enough for me to build a book upon one of the few fundamental truths which mankind has learned. Perhaps in five years I can put it over. Perhaps write a *Tom Jones* or a *Clarissa Harlowe*.

Two generations ago his grandfather, also William Faulkner, wrote a sentimental novel, *The White Rose of Memphis*, in which sweet-

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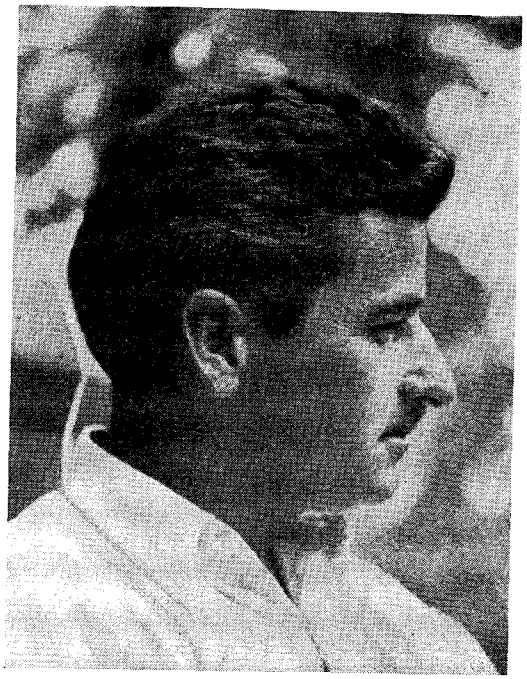


The pictures illustrating this article were made by the author, Marshall J. Smith, a Mississippi newspaper man. Faulkner's friends pronounce them the best likenesses that have appeared.

ness and virtue triumphed over the powers of evil. The grandfather pictured the magnolias and myrtle flowers of the Victorian era but the present William Faulkner sees and writes of a tragic decadence. His characters come from among the people with whom he lives.

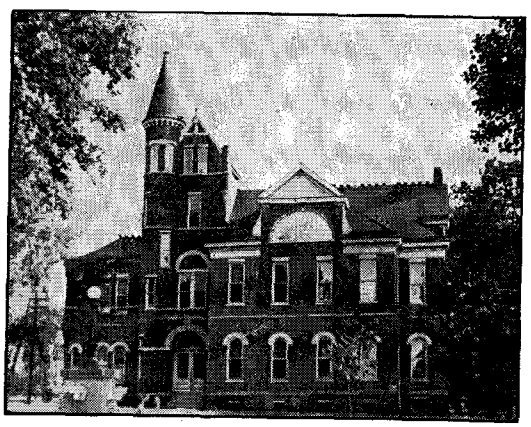
But there is one character that did not come from Oxford. He was one of Roark Bradford's boys. Do you remember the Negro who was hanged in *Sanctuary* and who protested that his execution would mean the end of the "best baritone singer in Mississippi"?

"Oh, yes, I stole that character from Roark Bradford," Faulkner admitted. "He told me that story one night while we were just talking. I waited two years for him to use it, but he never did."

The inspiration—Faulkner would scoff at the word—for his first novel, *Soldiers' Pay*, came from Sherwood Anderson. He met Anderson after being fired as postmaster at the University of Mississippi—according to one version, postal inspectors complained he was throwing away incoming mail, particularly newspapers, and unanimously agreed on his removal; another story is that the students beat in vain upon the doors of the office, crying for their mail while the postmaster sat in the back office with his feet on a table, reading poetry; while a third and still more libellous version has it that the future novelist was caught studying life as it is revealed in private mail.

"I took the rest of the money I had saved as postmaster and went to New Orleans," Faulkner went on. He rarely uses the personal pronoun, or slurs it so that you cannot hear it. "Planned to go to Europe. Met Sherwood Anderson for the first time, although had known his wife in New York. Lived at Anderson's house in New Orleans.

"He suggested to me that I write a novel. As I did not show any inclination to go to work, that might be a good way to avoid it—turn writer.



The Law Building of the University of Mississippi. After the war, and before he had written "Soldiers' Pay", Faulkner painted the roof and steeple of this building in one of his odd-job periods, swinging from a rope as he smeared on the black paint.

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"In six weeks told Anderson had finished the novel. He offered to write a letter to his publisher, Liveright. He did so without having read a line of the book. He told Liveright it was a fine book and he shouldn't miss it. Liveright accepted the manuscript. For the next three years I was Liveright's bond-slave."

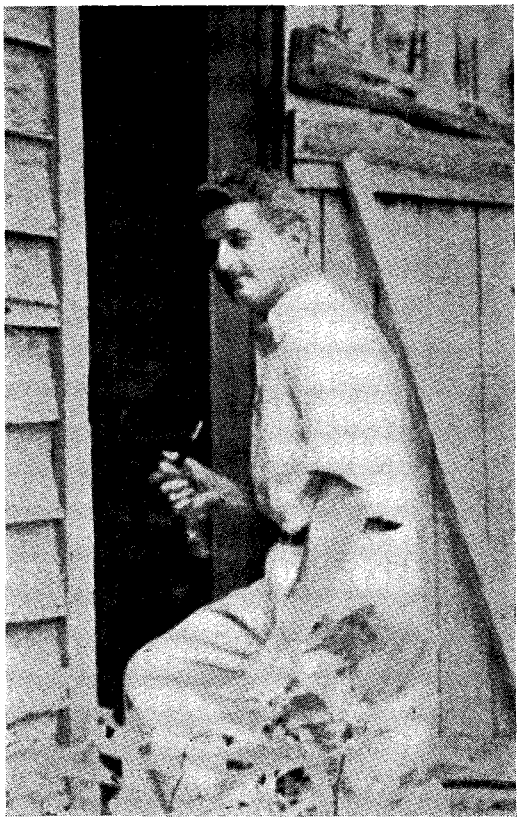
Anderson had been feeding and rooming Faulkner for weeks and was willing to pass on the task of providing for a genius. The book had been written in a side street in New Orleans where cheap music accompanied cheaper drinks. Faulkner also wrote poems and sketches for the New Orleans *Double Dealer* and lush stories for the Sunday magazine section of the *Times-Picayune*.

That was in 1925. In the summer of that year the freighter *West Ivis*, carrying a cargo from New Orleans to Genoa, numbered among its crew two rough-bearded young men both bearing the name of William. The one surnamed Spratling was an artist who later exiled himself in Mexico and became a commentator with pen and crayon on Mexican art and folk-life. Before the *West Ivis* had landed there had been thrown overboard along with its garbage some dozens of sonnets written by the other William between his duties in the engine room and on deck. It made him feel clean, Faulkner said.

The European jaunt lasted six or eight months, most of it in Italy. Then during his stop of a few weeks in New York Faulkner arranged with Liveright for a second novel and went back to Mississippi to write it, *Mosquitoes*. The writing was not done in Oxford but in a little town down on the Gulf of Mexico, Pascagoula, near Biloxi.

Three of Faulkner's novels have been refused, though today they are highly esteemed. Liveright wouldn't take *Sartoris*. Harcourt, Brace accepted it but balked at *The Sound and the Fury*. Harrison Smith took the manuscript and published it. Neither Faulkner nor Smith expected the book to sell. "The next year—1928—I wrote *Sanctuary* but Hal Smith said this was too tough and he held it up until I had written *As I Lay Dying*."

The novel which Faulkner considers his best—*As I Lay Dying*—was written in a coal bunker at Oxford, Mississippi when he was working on the night shift of a power plant. The hum of the dynamo fascinated Faulkner and his book semed to fairly build itself; it was completed in six weeks. He says he never rewrote a line. "Some day I'm going



"On the surface he was a young Mississippi farmer who didn't mind bottling beer in his kitchen on Sunday."

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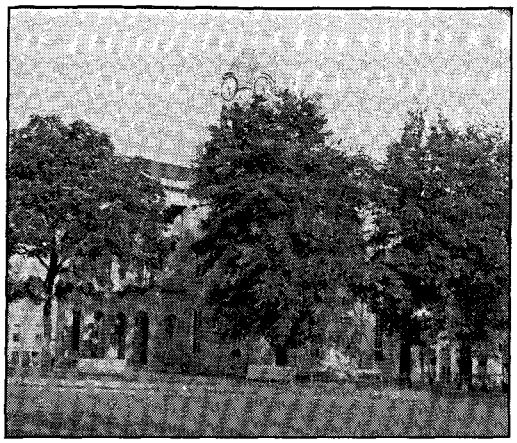

The courthouse of Mr. Faulkner's "Jefferson" —alias Oxford, Mississippi. This is the chief architectural eminence of the town and stands near the statue of a rebel soldier which Faulkner describes as "shading his carven eyes with his marble hand".

to buy a dynamo and put it in my workroom."

When I saw him Faulkner was working on a new book, a collection of short stories. He believes that a book of short stories should be linked together by characters or chronology. This collection was to be called *These Thirteen*, the stories dealing with the war, the imaginary town of Jefferson, and a few in other settings.

But away with literature. Sam was bored. He went to the garden where another churn had been "making" for three days and returned with a pitcher of beer. He said something about the corn "needin' rain".

"Then something will have to be done about it," Faulkner said. "I don't mind buying corn to feed my stock but I'd hate to have to buy corn to piece out the fall run with."

We laughed. Then I asked Faulkner what he thought about education. He replied he had spent five years in the seventh grade and the smart-cracking Faulkner, the one that had first greeted me, appeared again:

"Quit school and went to work in grandfather's bank. Learned the medicinal value of his liquor. Grandfather thought it was the janitor. Hard on the janitor. War came. Liked British uniform. Got commission R.F.C. pilot. Crashed. Cost British government 2000 pounds. Was still pilot. Crashed. Cost British government 2000 pounds. Quit. Cost British government $84.30. King said, 'Well done'. Returned to Mississippi."

The war hurt Faulkner. It took him time to recover. He painted roofs at the University of Mississippi at Oxford while he tried to regain what the conflict had taken away. Stark Young was in Mississippi at that time. He was absorbing material in Oxford that later resulted in *Heaven Trees*.

"Met Stark Young on the street one day," Faulkner said. He laid aside his pipe and smiled as he recalled his adventure. "Young said I should go to New York. He said that was the place to be. Well, that was an idea. I had one hundred dollars. I had been painting, you know. So with sixty dollars of my stake spent for railroad fare I went to New York. Went to see Stark Young—he had said to be sure and come to see him.

"Young wasn't at home. He wasn't at home for a week. Lived on my forty dollars till he got to town. Then I moved in on Young. He had just one bedroom so I slept on an antique Italian sofa in his front room. It was too short. I didn't learn until three years later that Young lived in mortal terror that I would push the arm off that antique sofa while I slept.

"Stayed with Young until he suggested I better get something to do. He helped me to get a place at Lord and Taylor's. I worked in the book department until I got fired. Think I was a little careless about making change or something. Then I came on home."

The success business has never worried

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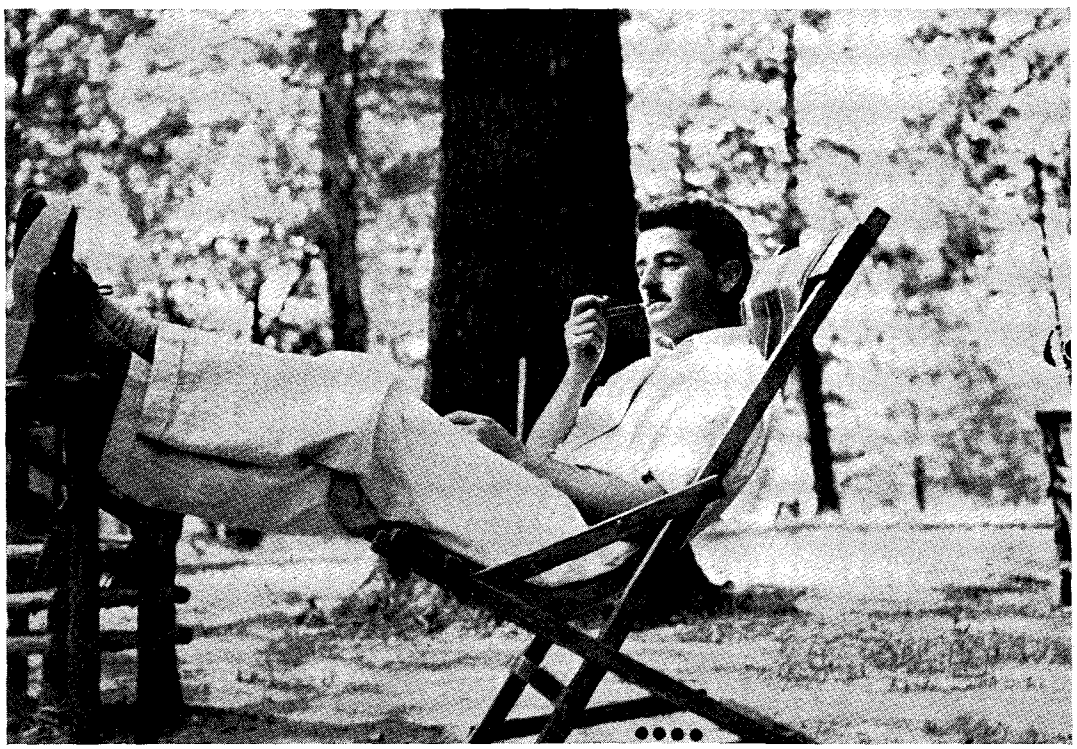
Faulkner. He has been fired or quit every job he has ever held. Yet he says:

"We are here to work. It is either sweat or die." Faulkner leaned further back in his chair and put his feet on the table. "Where is there a law requiring we should be happy? A man can be happy doing a tough job well or failing in a tough job. But contentment and happiness come only to vegetables when they sit still, never to man himself because he is the victim of his own thinking and his own sweat.

"Now about education. A man cannot be educated into happiness. The best education can do for him is to enable him to learn something about the history of mankind—that is, the printed word—and the printed word that lasts over centuries has for its skeleton tragedy or despair.

"So when a man learns to read, he learns of the tragedy and despair of his own kind which he himself may suffer. It is better for him not to know this since he may escape it, but once he reads it, it is part of his life—a part of his own experience.

"Let a man fill his days with hard work, then he will fill his nights with sleep. If he does this, he will not have time to outrage moral law. He will lead a pure life in spite of himself."



"Faulkner leaned further back in his chair and put his feet on the table: 'Where is there a law requiring we should be happy? We are here to work. It is either sweat or die'."

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PLEASING THE YOUTHFUL CRITICS

by Paul Allen

THERE are but two things to remember in reading any article about children's books. One is that these books are emphatically for children and must be judged by children's standards, which are quite different from the adult's and often more severe and honest. The other is, very obviously, that the child as an individual will react in a very personal manner. No general sweeping statement as to the book's universal excellence will impress him or influence him. If he dismisses *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* with a phrase you are quite sure even an experimental school would not permit, accept his dictum. He is honest and for him *Alice* is no good. One can but separate the obvious trash from the current publications and present a selection of the remainder. The child will do the ultimate criticizing.

However, Christmas makes the child more tolerant of our efforts. And there is nothing more in the spirit of the season than *The Christ Child* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.00). Maud and Miska Petersham have produced a book for this year and many years to come. With the familiar words of Matthew and Luke, they retell the story of the Nativity and illustrate it in their best manner. Here is a new Madonna, a beautiful young woman with a child, divine, but an adorable baby none the less. The colour work, done in Germany, reproduces the exquisite tones of the original water-colours with fidelity.

Equally successful, though in another field is *Snippy and Snappy* (Coward-McCann. $1.50). Wanda Gag's newest picture book of two field mice who wander into a strange house will provide no end of joy. As in *Millions of Cats* her story is childishly simple, with pity and good humour behind it. Her drawing is, of course, unique. These two imps are rather akin to the hero of *The Meddlesome Mouse* (Macmillan. $2.50), who gets into all kinds of trouble until Mr. Porky Pine punishes him. Vera Neville has drawn these beasties in soft pastels. Another very subtly amusing book is *A Head for Happy* (Macmillan. $2.50), wherein Helen Sewell's three little girls make a doll and go half-way round the world to find a suitable head for him. Told almost without words, for the soft black and white full page illustrations carry the story very well, it is distinctly for the imaginative child. But for more riotous humour there is nothing better than *The Hole in the Wall* (Knopf. $2.00). René d'Harnoncourt has created a hilarious situation involving a man drawn on a wall with a good appetite for onion soup. Truly Mexican in colour and design, it is as attractive as it is funny. *The Magic Rug* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.50), by Edgar d'Aulaire, a picture book evolved from an oriental rug, also combines colour and story very successfully.

With *Crocodile* (Lippincott. $1.50) the Soviet influence makes itself felt. However there are no dire results, for it is merely the adventures of a very capitalistic crocodile who is so reformed by a schoolboy that he frees all the animals in the zoo. Babette

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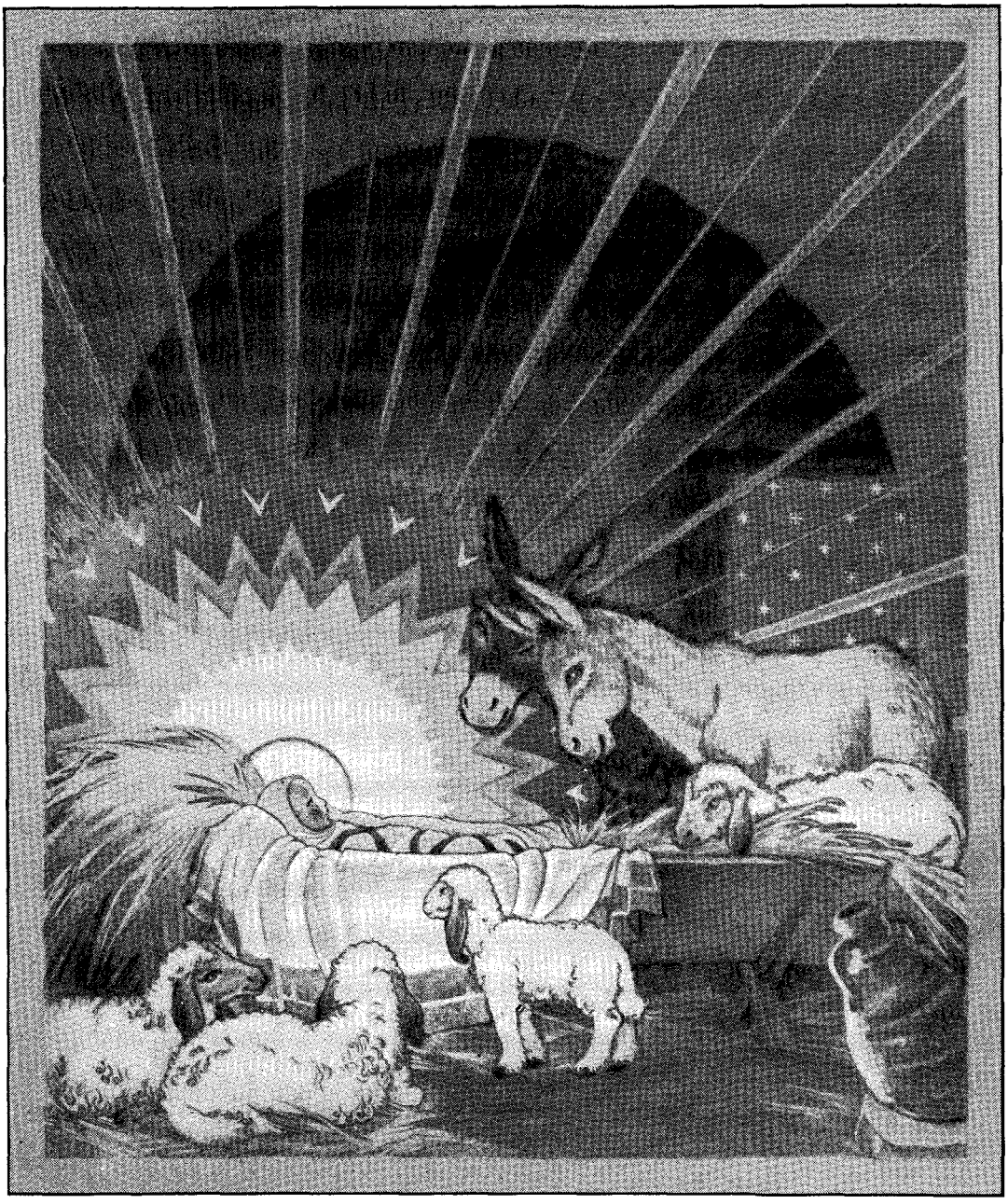

"THE CHRIST CHILD"

Water-colour illustration by Maud and Miska Petersham; from "The Christ Child" (Doubleday, Doran).

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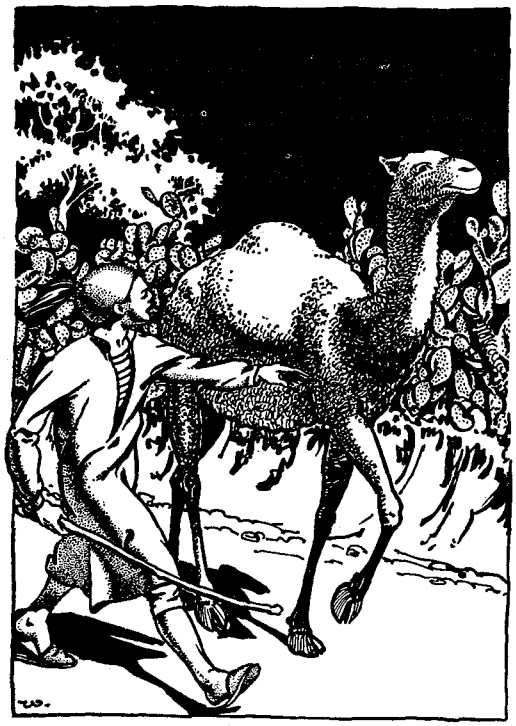
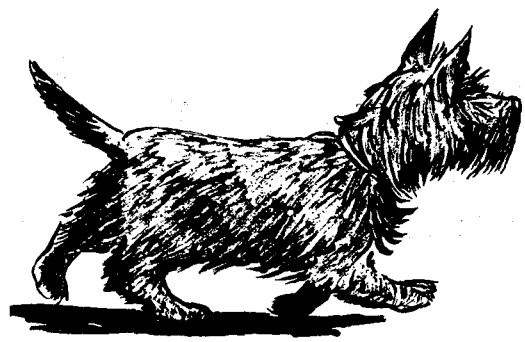


Illustration from "Ali the Camel"; text and drawings by Rhea Wells (Doubleday, Doran).

Deutsch does the English verses for K. Chukovsky's pictures. An animal of quite different disposition is Clare Newberry's *Herbert the Lion* (Brewer, Warren & Putnam. $1.75), who grows quite huge but remains embarrassingly affectionate. For boys who are not afraid of lions or anything there is Paul Horgan's *Men of Arms* (McKay. $2.50). These soldiers of various periods are amazingly warlike until they reach present-day uniforms.

For those who want more than a picture book try Teresay's *A Doll, Two Children, and Three Storks* (Dutton. $2.50). This Italian story of a toy-maker has an old-fashioned charm. Or equally popular would be Lucy Fitch Perkins's latest addition to her ever growing family *The Pickaninny Twins* (Houghton Mifflin. $1.75). Dorothy Lathrop's *The Fairy Circus* (Macmillan. $3.00) is hard to resist. Her exquisite story, illustrated so delicately in colour and black and white, will be an event in many a child's reading life. A more universal favourite, however, is apt to be *Ching-Li and the Dragons* (Macmillan. $3.00). This unusual story by Alice Woodbury Howard has been illustrated by Lynd Ward. It will enthrall a sensitive child. Decorative in a much more formal way is Sonia Gagarin's Russian method in *Papa Peacock* (Brewer, Warren & Putnam. $1.50). And the story by Félicité Le Fèvre is "a truly tempting tale". Very alluring also is the story of *Building a House in Sweden* (Macmillan. $1.75) by Marjorie Cautley. But Helen Sewell's illustrations, though as charming as usual, show up to less advantage when reproduced in brown. On the other hand we have a reproduction in yellow of a Chinese urchin whose story children will have no difficulty in persuading their parents to read aloud again and again. *Little Pear* (Harcourt, Brace. $2.00) is about an oriental Skippy, whose daily fun and misfortunes will endear him to every one. Eleanor Frances Lattimore has combined just the right amount of friskiness and quaintness in her gay saga of Little Pear's adventures, and the pictures alone are enough to get this lad just where he wants to go—everywhere.

For the child who will turn his nose up at



From "Angus and the Cat"; written and illustrated by Marjorie Flack (Doubleday, Doran).

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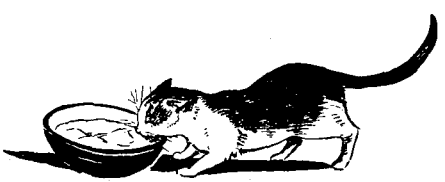
all these as "baby stuff", Parker Fillmore has done a not too exciting mystery story *The Stuffed Parrot* (Harcourt, Brace. $2.00). Or give him fairy tales. Here Mary Gould Davis will more than satisfy with *The Truce of the Wolf* (Harcourt, Brace. $2.00). These stories are redolent of old Italy and those children who have heard Miss Davis at the New York Public Library will agree enthusiastically that she knows a good story and how to tell it. Some stories we hope to hear her tell some day are in *The Gypsy Story Teller* by Cora Morris (Macmillan. $3.00). This book might well hold any child spellbound. Here are the tales from many lands that gypsies still tell around the campfire. They are full of the things children love—beautiful princesses, old dwarfs, foolish peasants, and most scaly dragons. These same old-world characters appear also in *The Red Man's Wonder Book* (Dutton. $3.00). Howard Kennedy has woven them skilfully into a narrative concerning a small white boy and Chief Ossawippi, who has some of Uncle Remus's persuasive humour. Alida Malkus does somewhat the same thing in *The Spindle Imp* (Harcourt, Brace. $2.00), through whom a little girl in ancient Yucatan hears the old Mayan myths. And here Erick Berry's forceful pictures add to the text.



Indians are always fascinating to children. As a result they are used by inept writers. But Carl Moon, who now has a large following, is one of the few who can romanticize about them convincingly. His new yarn, *Painted Moccasin* (Stokes. $2.50) is a breathless story of a Pueblo boy who displays all

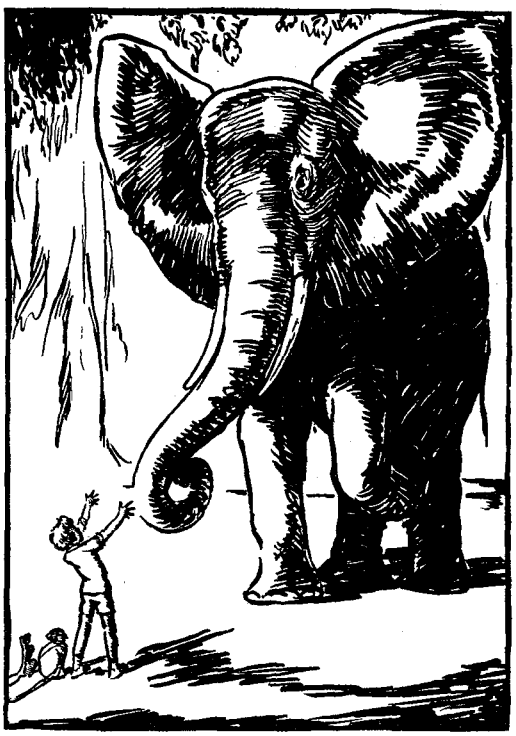


Illustration by Erick Berry, from "Sammy and Silverband" by Janet Miller (Houghton Mifflin).

the virtues of his race. More authentic, perhaps, but not so exciting is Chief Standing Bear's *My Indian Boyhood* (Houghton Mifflin. $1.75). This circumstantial account of the daily life of a young Sioux will appeal more to those boys who are really serious about their enthusiasms. In the same field, *Waterless Mountain* (Longmans, Green. $3.00) achieves an almost magical success. For Laura Adams Armer has written a sensitive tale of a young Navaho boy that must be called literature. She has lived among the Indians and her sympathetic understanding of them colours her story, her very style, with a serenity that is bewitching. Even the illustrations are as clear as the desert air. Children respond with gratifying warmth to beauty that is sincere and unaffected. This is a book they will appreciate. In fact, only a child can understand it completely.

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Animals, even more than Indians, are of perennial interest to children. At least authors and publishers seem to think so. Picture books are full of them and for the older children a whole zoo has been let loose. In *The Picture Book of Animals*, selected by Isabel Ely Lord (Macmillan. $2.50), almost everything from elephant to titmouse can be found in particularly effective photographs. While in *The Singing Dog* by Bessie Watson and Russell Carter (Penn. $1.50) familiar pets comport themselves in a very human manner. It is rather astounding, to say the least, to see a tea-party given by two kittens with white mice, not as refreshments, but as guests. Marjorie Flack gives us more of Angus in *Angus and the Cat* (Doubleday, Doran. $1.00), in which that joyous Scottie meets his match but saves his dignity. And

Drawing from "Little Pear" by Eleanor Frances Lattimore (Harcourt, Brace).

the reindeer Tooktoo reappear in Marie Peary's book *Muskox* (Morrow. $2.00). The tale of the Arctic trek that Muskox and Tooktoo make is more than fortunate for them and for their friends. Kurt Wiese illustrated this book and found time, among other things, to do one of his own, *Ella the Elephant* (Coward-McCann. $1.50). Ella can hold her own with all the elephants captive in books. As a baby she is an appealing though rather unwieldy darling. For the very young who can read big print there is Helen Fuller Orton's *The Twin Lambs* (Stokes. $1.25). These happy lambs frisk chummily with a little boy and girl through Marjorie Flack's jolly illustrations.

Animals of much more sophistication are those depicted in *Robbers in the Garden* (Dutton. $2.00). Marion Bullard herself when she wrote the book must have giggled over Toad as a detective, for she put herself in as one of the characters. Her illustrations, quite suitably, look as if a child had done them. Mukerji on the other hand treats his animals very differently. In *Bunny, Hound, and Clown* (Dutton. $2.50) there is a group of Hindu stories for younger readers in which the animals are quite definitely animals, with their animal traits brilliantly portrayed. Kurt Wiese does his usual penetrating illustrating in this book. Janet Miller, like Mukerji, allows the animals to speak for themselves in *Sammy and Silverband* (Houghton Mifflin. $2.00). This narrative of a boy and his big gray elephant, with other stories woven in, is especially interesting and gives Erick Berry a splendid opportunity for her accurate but imaginative drawing.

But of all animals the dog is the child's favourite. No matter how young a boy is he will undoubtedly want to read about dogs. For him and his sister, there is a particularly appealing French mongrel named Wags to

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From "The Fairy Circus"; written and illustrated by Dorothy Lathrop (Macmillan).

be found in *Scalawag* by Aimé Reibald (Stokes. $2.00). The older boys have two new dogs to meet this year. Ross Santee introduces in *The Pooch* (Cosmopolitan. $2.00) a rough-and-ready fox terrier who would understand a fellow, particularly if he is young and wants to be a cowpuncher. A real dog, and a very important one, was the fox terrier who went with Byrd on his expeditions. It is a pity he died too soon to see his biography, *Igloo,* by Jane Brevoort Walden (Putnam. $2.50), with pictures by Diana Thorne, though it is perhaps a little too fulsomely sensitive for such a virile adventurer. A fitting companion, or foe, to these dogs is the magnificent cat in *Yellow Jacket* (Penn. $2.50). This independent feline reverts to the wild and fights his way gamely through all the ills that fur is heir to. Books about cats are all too rare, particularly those which are understanding, and Russell Gordon Carter, and his illustrator, Ralph Prather, know cats too well to presume to idealize them.

Of all the animals this year the most ingratiating is *Ali the Camel* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.00). This obstreperous baby ambles right out of Rhea Wells's new book into the hearts of the younger readers. Ali's trip with Bali, his young master, and their adventures in town have the same naïve charm that has always made this author's work a success with his severest critics, the children for whom he writes. Here, as in his former books, we have no "strange peeps". Wonder and strangeness are things a child takes for granted and adjusts himself to very easily. As usual the illustrations, in strong pure colour, graceful in design and full of interest, are an integral part of the story. The book as a whole is excellently planned, with an eye for detail that makes it thoroughly satisfying and enthralling. At least several young members of the Junior Literary Guild have found it so.

When we leave such books for younger children to approach the books for older boys

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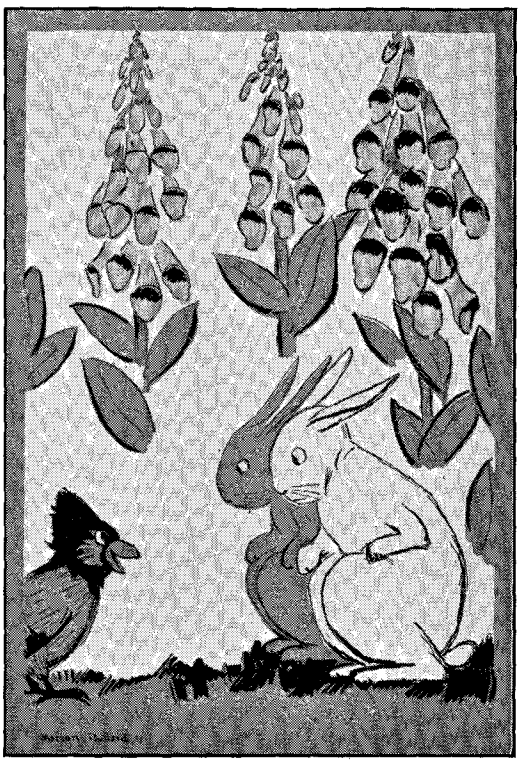

From "Robbers in the Garden"; text and illustrations by Marion Bullard (Dutton).

and girls we come to a group very large and for the most part inferior. It is a difficult half-way period for authors and readers alike. But there are some more or less shining examples, particularly in the field of historical novels. Among these one of the best is *Out of the Flame* (Longmans, Green. $2.50), where we have a panorama of the early sixteenth century. Eloise Lounsbery crowds her pages with such romantic figures as Rabelais, Francis the First, and Marguerite of Navarre, but she does not allow them to halt a breathless story. Ivy Bolton treats another aspect of the Middle Ages in *Shadow of the Crown* (Longmans, Green. $2.00) wherein a boy with the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem fights his way through danger and intrigue. But this field belongs particularly to Harold Lamb, whose superb *Durandal* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.50) has all the colour and movement of the crusades. Later in chronology and merit comes *The Road to Granada* (Brewer, Warren & Putnam. $1.75), a swift-moving tale of a young Spanish lad who as a companion of Columbus becomes involved in a fight for the maps that ultimately led to the discovery of America. And standing by himself as a historical novelist is Eric Kelley with a story of Poland in the twelfth century. *The Golden Star of Halich* (Macmillan. $2.50) combines mystery, excitement and a very skilful re-creation of an almost unknown but romantic period.

One of the most interesting aspects of historical writing for boys this year is the reappearance of the Incas and the Aztecs. That magnificent civilization that the Spaniards found here lends itself gloriously to romance, particularly in *Conquistador* (Duffield. $2.00) which is based on an authentic contemporary account by a young secretary to the great Don de Heredia. Miss E. J. Craine has made judicious use of the material so that the character of this original writer shows through. It is an extraordinary book, more vivid than mere fiction would dare to be. In *The Scarlet Fringe* (Longmans, Green. $2.00), by Helen Clark Fernald and Edwin M. Slocombe, we have another story about the same period told from the Inca's point of view. The smaller boys will enjoy a somewhat analogous book, *Lazaro in the Pueblos* (Houghton Mifflin. $2.00), concerning the Spaniards and Indians of New Mexico. Cornelia Cannon's work here as always is exciting and good.

When we leave the strict bounds of history to go to sea we can expect almost anything. There is *Away to Sea* (Harcourt, Brace. $2.50); a rapid story of slave traders and hardships in the swamps of Louisiana for boys who read Stephen Meader's books as

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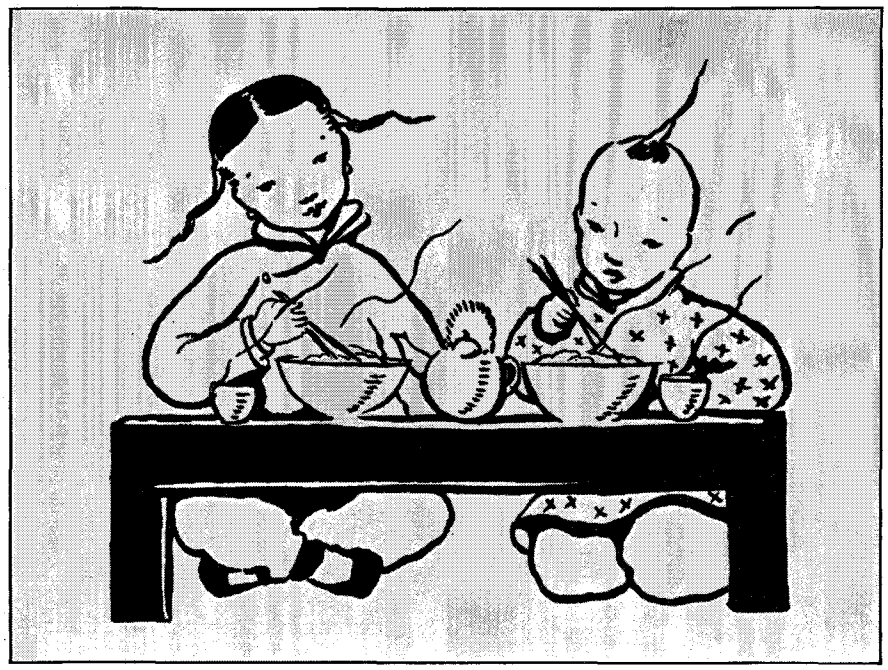
fast as he can write them. Or one can follow the mysterious adventures of the young lad in *The Enchanted Admiral* (Century. $2.00). This tale by Edith Ballinger Price uses the familiar device of taking a contemporary boy back through time to sail on a Roman trireme, a Viking ship, a Venetian galley, and so on. It is cleverly knit together.

But the find of the year is the overwhelming *Java Ho!* (Coward-McCann. $2.50). Putnam. $1.75) but David Putnam can undoubtedly hold his own with his numerous admirers. He is a big lad now and last summer's voyage up to Greenland was as a matter of fact no child's play.

And it is difficult to place Monica Shannon's book precisely, for she has the delightful habit of standing alone. In *Tawnymore* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.50) she has deserted her fairy stories for a tale of pirates and pearl-



From "Little Pear", written and illustrated by Eleanor Frances Lattimore (Harcourt, Brace).

Johan Wigmore Fabricius has used the old log of the Dutch Captain Bontekoe's voyage to the East Indies in 1618. With the doughty captain went four boys who had all the adventures any lad could desire, as well as terrific hardships. This is one of the best sea stories ever written and one of the most amusing. Fathers should give it to their sons for the sake of reading it themselves.

It is unfortunate to turn next to *David Sails the Viking Trail* (Brewer, Warren & divers, but she carries over her sense of humour and her keen relish for a good story. Nearest to her book comes the *Boy of the South Seas* (Coward-McCann. $2.50). This boy has such a vivid life among glamorous surroundings that many an American boy will feel the same sense of wonder that shows through Eunice Tietjen's prose. Perhaps equally foreign to American children will seem *The Good Detectives* by Margaret Leveson Gower (Century. $2.00), a distinctly

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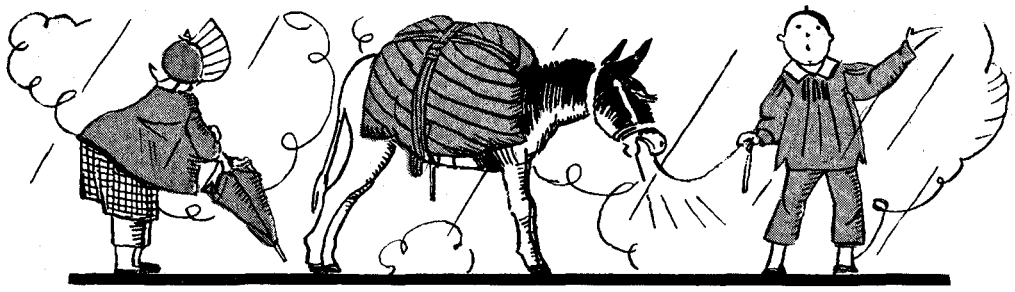

From "Weather Signs and Rhymes"; collected and decorated by Maginel Wright Barney (Knopf).

English story of two boys and their sister who solve a very important family secret, which is more for adults who remember their youth. But there is undoubtedly enough of Stalky about the family to amuse boys who like exciting things told calmly. More to the general taste, however, is *Douglas of Porcupine* (Houghton Mifflin. $2.00), an account of the strange things that happened to a family spending the winter on an island off the coast of Maine. Louise Andrews Kent has done an unusual book with a good plot and some excellent writing.

It is just as well that girls like to read boys' books since for the most part there is comparatively little written for them that measures up to their brothers' good fortune. Among the few for younger girls is *The Coming of the Dragon Ships* by Florence and Howard Everson (Dutton. $2.00), a story of a girl in Iceland at the time of the Vikings. The characteristically primitive illustrations by Edgar d'Aulaire distinctly add to the merit of the book. Of course, Eliza Orne White can always be depended on to write a good New England story. *When Abigail Was Seven* (Houghton Mifflin. $2.00), with scissor cuts by Lisl Hummel, is a quiet tale of quiet days. Florence Choate and Elizabeth Curtis, who have combined before on somewhat different material, give us a story of New York City in the sixties in *Pinafores and Pantalets* (Harcourt, Brace. $2.00). Girls will like the story for its own sake but only their parents will see the nostalgia in it. Something of the same sort might be expected from Caroline Snedeker's new book by those who remember *Downright Dency*. But *The Town of the Fearless* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.50) is not an unqualified success, for Mrs. Snedeker, though she writes well, and portrays the pioneer West with a sure touch, allows her preoccupation with the religious cult of New Harmony to lead her into a moral tone entirely too solemn for a book meant to interest children of this generation. More suitable is *A Candle in the Mist* (Houghton Mifflin. $2.00), a story of the early days of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Florence Means writes well about her young school teacher and succeeds in creating a clear picture of the times. Rachel Field, who does all things well, has achieved a splendid story of pio-

Scissor cut by Lisl Hummel; from "When Abigail was Seven" by Eliza Orne White (Houghton Mifflin).

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neering in Maine, *Calico Bush* (Macmillan. $2.00). The story is outstanding if only because the characters are so vividly real.

Girls' books with a modern setting are for the most part like modern novels. A distinctly good example is *The Blue Junk* (Longmans, Green. $2.00), in which Priscilla Holton takes her young heroine through the intrigue of the opium traffic in China today. And among the ever-present college stories is *Freshman at Arden* (Holt. $1.75), which is good enough to make one hope that Bertha Goes will continue the series. For the others one can be assured they are generally very safe and without much distinction.

With all of these books the ultimate aim is to give pleasure, but no one can forget that there are many books forbiddenly labelled "instructive for the young". All too soon children discover that their delight in reading is often taken advantage of to make them learn things which are not in the least what they want to know. So it behooves the writer who would give the child an improving book to play fair, putting in as much fun as instruction. Mr. V. M. Hillyer certainly recognized this, and his method is *The Dark Secret* (Century. $2.50), a group of interesting, convincing stories about very real children. In fact they are so real that their faults are quite apparent and the moral goes without saying. The book has been tested and, if the child is not told the secret, the results are very satisfactory. W. Maxwell Reed, on the other hand, cannot take advantage of this subterfuge in *The Stars for Sam* (Harcourt, Brace. $3.00) since astronomy cannot be sugar-coated without losing its majesty. But he writes so fervently that he appeals to the growing intelligence, making learning an exciting adventure.

History has been handled much better in *Since Columbus* (Morrow. $2.00), an illustrated story of America by Leslie Thomas. Strong illustrations in colour, with a good flowing text that emphasizes interesting detail, make the book very suitable for young readers. Marie Lawson has done much the same thing for older children on a more ambitious scale with *Hail Columbia* (Doubleday, Doran. $5.00). It is a magnificent book, almost a chant to America. The striking poster-like full-page illustrations, as well as occasional drawings in the text, help to make it a book for the imaginative child who sees romance in progress. One might say the same story is told again in *The Book of American Presidents* (Whittlesey House. $2.50). Esse V. Hathaway however, confines herself to chatty and very laudatory biographies of all our chief executives, including Herbert Hoover. A more formal biography is *The Boys' Life of Washington* (Century.

From "Sammy and Silverband" by Janet Miller; with illustrations by Erick Berry (Houghton Mifflin).

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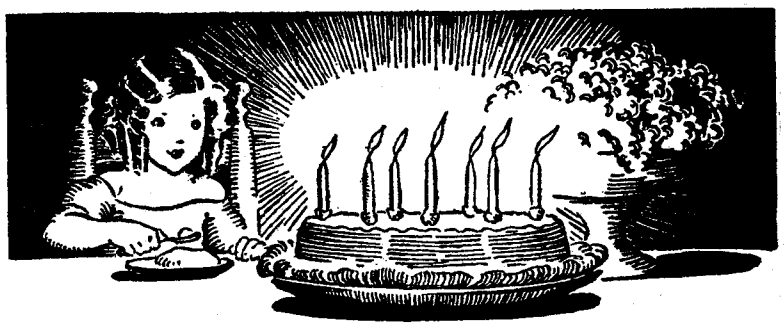
$2.50); Helen Nicolay tells a straightforward story without undue reverence. It is interesting to compare it with *In the Days of Young Washington* by Nancy Byrd Turner (Houghton Mifflin. $2.00), outright fiction, of course, but a very human presentation of young George. Another historical biography that succeeds against odds is *Stonewall* (Dutton. $2.50). Julia Davis Adams has such a distinct flair for making authentic history as informal as fiction that her book on General Jackson seems very real and quite without sentimentality, and without that attitude which one might call "professionally Southern". Cameron Wright's illustrations, inspired by contemporary prints, help the illusion.

The most ingenious biography of the year, and in some respects the most interesting, is *The Voyage of the Beagle* (Lippincott. $2.00). Amabel Williams-Ellis has taken sections from the book by Charles Darwin and, by interpolating parts of his letters, incidents told in biographies of him, and a running commentary of her own, she has created an exceedingly readable book that combines biography, travel, and natural science. But the great holiday event for an ever-growing number of children will be the appearance of *Number Nine Joy Street*, edited by Michael Lynn (Appleton. $2.50). This, the latest of a series now well known, contains some excellent stories by important British authors who have illustrators who aid and abet them perfectly.

These are the new books, but new books are not necessarily the best. Much has been published in the last few years that no child should miss. Anyone who would explore the best in children's books cannot do better than read the third volume of *The Three Owls* (Coward-McCann. $3.00), in which Anne Carroll Moore has collected articles written by herself and her associates covering the best things published in recent years. Since the appearance of her article in THE BOOKMAN in 1918 Miss Moore has been one of the foremost critics of children's books. Her sensitive imagination combined with strict and logical standards have made her a powerful factor in the growth of an almost new type of literature. It is not too much to say that her interest and efforts are in great part responsible for the general excellence of the books we have been considering.



From "Pinafore and Pantalettes"; written and illustrated by Florence Choate and Elizabeth Curtis (Harcourt, Brace).

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CHARLES DICKENS AND HIS OLDEST FRIEND

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS TO THOMAS BEARD

Edited by Bernard Darwin

Part III

THIS, the third instalment of the hitherto unpublished letters of Charles Dickens to Thomas Beard, covers a period of about ten years beginning in 1849, when Dickens was thirty-seven years old. If we reckon time in terms of books this period begins just after *Dombey* and extends, roughly, from *David Copperfield* to *A Tale of Two Cities*. It includes at least three notable landmarks in his life: first, there is the founding in 1850 of *Household Words*, the magazine which he edited with such infinite painstaking in the matter of finding, encouraging and criticizing contributions, and second, in 1856, the buying of Gad's Hill Place, the house near Rochester for which as a small boy he had conceived a romantic desire. Thirdly, in 1858, he began those readings from his novels which were to make him more popular even than before, to enrich him far more than did his books and ultimately to wear him out and hasten his death.

The first letter is a double invitation to dine and to stay at the seaside. There have been several of these in the previous two numbers, but if there were a hundred I could hardly bear to leave out one of them, they are so cordial and jolly and wholly delightful in Dickens's characteristic manner. The first is dated from Devonshire Terrace on June 21, 1849, and runs:

My dear ould Mus'r Beard,

Come and dine with us at 5 on Sunday week —next Sunday we are going out. We will have out the Battledores, leaping-poles and other athletic instruments, including a glass of rare port, and a bottle of iced gin punch.

You are right Sir. June *is* a fine month for the country. On the 1st of August we shall disappear and if you don't come and stop a long time and keep on coming and stopping a long time until the end of September, you'll find yourself in the wrong box, ever after. I have not decided on the place yet, but it will be down a railroad, and where there is good sea-bathing. You may rely upon *that*, my buck.

The next is nearly a month later—the 18th of July—and shows that the seaside place has now been decided on as Bonchurch.

My dear Mus'r Beard,

Behold my address from Monday next, until the end of September—

Inimitable B.
Winterbourne Villa,
Bonchurch,
Isle of Wight.

! ! ! ! ! !

There is a Waterfall in the grounds, which I have driven a carpenter almost mad about by changing into a

SHOWER BATH

—with a fall of 150 feet! It is really an exquisite place altogether. As to getting to it, you leave Waterloo Station at ½ past 10—get to Portsmouth at ½ past 2—cross in a steamboat in half an hour to Ryde, and come on either in a stage-coach or a F.Q. No such scenery in England, certainly. I say no more until you come.

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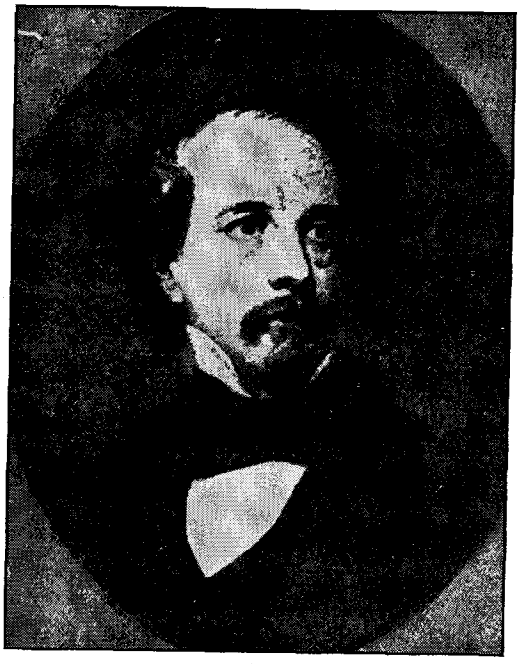

A copy of the Ary Scheffer portrait, made by Malcolm Stewart and presented to The Dickens House by Sir Charles Wakefield.

All you have got to do, now, is to name your own time, and stay ours—which is, at the lowest a fortnight, or a penalty of leaping, with a pole, over a bathing machine (full of children) and three horses. But you must arrange for more visits than one—and look alive.

We were dreadfully shocked at Broadstairs, by seeing the Baldwinian Twins, whom I have taken the liberty of calling

The Measeliese Twins

—as opposed to the Siamese. Oh, the apparent age of those young codgers! They were on the sands, in the blue stage of rickets, with their small noses very red, and pinched up sharp at the ends. They slobbered as they dangled over the nurse's shoulder, and feebly crooning, looked out to sea, as if they were expecting the marine goblins who had changed them at their birth, to come and fetch them away to bowers of slime and seaweed. It was a dreadful spectacle—with a vague smell of cheese about it—and one I can never forget.

Ever heartily,
CHARLES DICKENS.

Another month passes. Beard has not yet come and Dickens writes anxiously to him at the *Morning Herald* office:

To the Editor of the *Morning Herald*.
Sir,

Knowing the extent of your acquaintance with sporting subjects, I make no apology for asking you the following question:

Can you (or any of your numerous correspondents) inform me of the date of the birth of the lively young colt Holiday, got by Beard out of Baldwin?

Your obedient servant,
FLASTER FLOBY.

"Flaster Floby" may refer to some joke between the two. At any rate Sir Henry Dickens, who has most kindly answered questions from me, cannot answer this one.

It is sad to know that after these ecstasies of anticipation the actual holiday was disenchanting. After enjoying it at first he found Bonchurch utterly exhausting. "If", he wrote to Forster, "the Patient happens to have been a good walker he finds ten miles an insupportable distance. . . . When he brushes his hair in the morning, he is so weak that he is obliged to sit on a chair to do it. . . . It's not hot, it's not close, I don't know what it is, but the prostration of it is *awful*." To make things worse John Leech had a severe blow on his head in bathing and Dickens and Beard sat up with him all one night.

The Mr. Baldwin alluded to, of whom we shall hear again, was Beard's master at the *Morning Herald*. The phrase "The inimitable B", often to be found in Dickens's letters, needs a word of explanation. As a very small boy at Chatham he had been for a short while at a school kept by a young Baptist minister, Mr. Giles. When *Pickwick* was in the full tide of success, Mr. Giles sent him a silver snuff-box with an inscription to "the inimitable Boz".

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We now skip two years to May, 1851, when Dickens was throwing himself with passionate enthusiasm into a theatrical enterprise by which he hoped to make much money for a fund to help literary men, called "The Guild of Literature and Art". Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton wrote a comedy called *Not so Bad as We Seem*. The Duke of Devonshire lent Devonshire House and the play was acted before the Queen and Prince Albert on May sixteenth. It was afterwards moved to the Hanover Square Rooms. The farce mentioned in the letter was a composite effort by Mark Lemon and Dickens in which he played himself. His hopes for the Guild were not realized. The play was of course a success but the project in the end faded away.

Wills will take care that Mr. Hastings has a book *before he leaves Devonshire House on Friday night*; but the comedy cannot be given out sooner. Even the Queen will not have it until the fifth act is on.

I was at first sorry (on reading your note) that you are not going yourself; but on second thoughts, I am glad. For I shall be able to give you a snug seat at the Hanover Square Rooms, and we shall have a New Farce this week which I think will be a "Screamer".

I am sorry for that brisk young Blade, and have observed his gradual decay. But I can't help it. What he undertakes to do, he *must* do

The performance of "Not so Bad as We Seem" at Devonshire House, before Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

—even to the plucking out of his whiskers; an embellishment which I can by no means allow in connection with that time. You have no idea of the work I have had. My legs swell so, with standing on the stage for hours together, that my stockings won't come off. I get so covered with sawdust among the carpenters that my Infants don't know me. I am so astonishingly familiar with everybody else's part, that I forget my own. I roar at the Troupe in general, to that extent that the excellent Duke (who is deaf) thinks in the remoteness of his own little library that the wind is blowing hard. Tailors, painters, gas-men, property ditto, supernumeraries, all sorts of strange beings, cluster round me all day long. Actresses entreat to be allowed to wear pearls (in the city—early in the morning) and I won't hear of it. I steel my heart against all the fascinations of life.

But I have set it on getting ten thousand pounds in 2 years for the establishment of this project—and if I don't, it shall not be my fault —nor that young fellow's either.

Ever affectionately,

C. D.

Among Mr. Thomas Beard's papers was a program from the performance at Devonshire House, and the cast is so full of interesting names that I give it here:

The Duke of Middlesex	Mr. Frank Stone
The Earl of Loftus	Mr. Dudley Costello
Lord Wilmot	Mr. Charles Dickens
Mr. Shadowly Softhead	Mr. Douglas Jerrold
Mr. Hardman	Mr. John Forster
Sir Geoffrey Thornside	Mr. Mark Lemon
Mr. Goodenough Easy	Mr. F. W. Topham
Lord le Trimmer	Mr. Peter Cunningham
Sir Thomas Timid	Mr. Westland Marston
Col. Flint	Mr. R. H. Horne
Mr. Jacob Tonson	Mr. Charles Knight
Smart	Mr. Wilkie Collins
Hodge	Mr. John Tenniel
Paddy O'Sullivan	Mr. Robert Bell
Mr. David Fallen	Mr. Augustus Egg
Lucy Thornside	Mrs. Henry Compton

The Silent Lady of Deadman's Lane.
Barbara Easy.

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"MR. FEZZIWIG'S BALL"

From John Leech's illustrations for "A Christmas Carol", the first of Dickens's great Christmas books and the most popular of his works after Pickwick.

A month or so later, on June 25, Dickens is proposing to take Beard down to Eton to see his godson, Charles Dickens the younger, at school there:

I write to you from Macready's where we have been staying a few days, to enquire if you can make next *Tuesday the 1st of July* a holiday? For this reason—I have promised Charley that I will appear at 11 that morning at Slough, armed with a hamper from Fortnum and Mason's, and take him and three other Etonian Shavers up the river. He "knows a bank" where we can dine; and if you can come, you and I will console ourselves for our antiquity after dinner with a trifle of tobacco and champagne in the starn of the wessel.

I shall be at my gipsy tent at the *Household Words* office, 16, Wellington Street North, tomorrow evening, and probably until after Wednesday. If you will send me a line there, I hope it will be to say that you can come—and we'll try to make out jovially.

N.B. Ice in the hamper.

The plan is elaborated in a letter dated June 30:

Contemplating the possibility of our being otherwise marooned by those young pirates, I have told Charley to turn out a big galley with an awning—the latter precaution ineffectual already, as far as I am concerned. I am so burnt, that I cannot calculate the amount of cold cream and powder that will have to be applied to my visage on Wednesday night before I can "go on" as a youthful lord. I don't see my way through the process.

I went down to Broadstairs yesterday, and came back this morning—O the sea!

From the published volume of Dickens's letters we know that the excursion took place. He wrote a delightful account of it to his friend Mrs. Watson of Rockingham Castle. "We dined in a field; what I suffered for fear those boys should get drunk, the struggle I underwent in a contest of feeling between hospitality and prudence, must ever remain untold. . . . They were very good, however. The speech of one became thick, and his eyes too like lobsters to be comfortable, but only temporarily. He recovered and I suppose outlived the salad he took." The party was wet through going home in a violent thunder-storm and that was *the* success of the day.

In 1852 there is the regular invitation to dine on the Inimitable's birthday. In the following year there is, on the 28th of August, another invitation to stay, this time at the Villa des Moulineaux at Boulogne. Dickens had just finished his labours upon *Bleak House.*

We have a charming doll's country-house here, of many rooms, with a large and extremely pretty garden—all fluttering and frisking in the shadows of no end of trees, but within ten minutes walk (regular advertisement distance) of the Post Office. French cooking. Excellent light wines. Conservatory to smoke in, etcetera, etcetera. I purpose going on into Italy on Mon-

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day the 10th of October. Any time between this day and that, which will suit you, will suit us perfectly. Your bed is always aired and ready, and you can't come too soon or go too late.

The Baldwinian sea Powers were observed (I hear) at Spithead in great force. May their profoundly unreasonable Majesty be propitious for escapement from Shoe Lane!

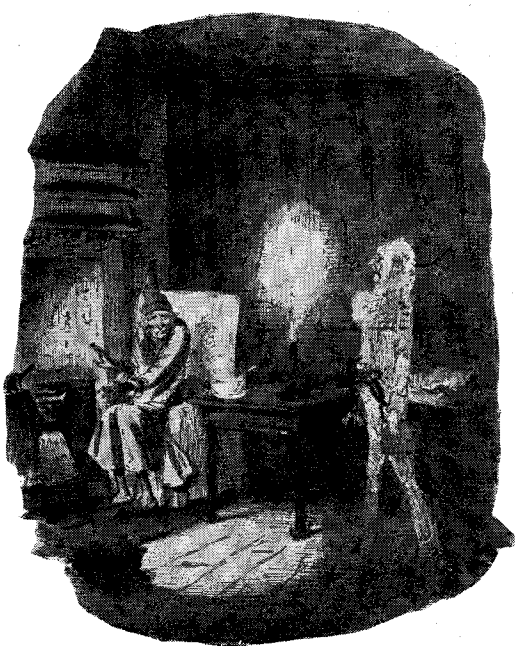
I think you know what a fine month September is? But it really ought to be a finer month than usual, this year, seeing how it has rained and blown in these parts since June.

All unite in loves. Wills and his wife are here. Wills took a warm bath yesterday—which, in his own words "prostrated" him. He crawled home at the rate of half a mile an hour, and then madly and with a horrible intensity, on which comment would be superfluous, tried to set himself up with—*Seltzer Water!*

There is no home news beyond this, except that the baby's name is The Plornishghenter, and that the Inimitable wears a satanic and gloomy moustache.

Wills was Mr. W. H. Wills, for twenty years Dickens's Assistant Editor on *Household Words* and its successor *All the Year Round*.

The Plornishghenter was Dickens's younger son, Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens. His nickname was given at even greater length by Forster as "Plornishmaroontigoonter", but he was generally known as "Plorn". Sir Henry Dickens tells me that termination was "of course an affectionate superlative". The "Plornish" part of it is interesting. In *Little Dorrit* there is Mr. Plornish of Bleeding Heart Yard, but the child was born in 1852 and *Little Dorrit* did not appear until 1855. Dickens however kept a note-book in which he wrote down odds and ends that occurred to him and among "Available Names" is to be found "Plornish". Sir Henry Dickens thinks that the chronology is this: his father came across the name somehow or other and noted it, then gave it to the boy and finally used it again in *Little Dorrit*. In the very next



"MARLEY'S GHOST"

As pictured by John Leech for "A Christmas Carol".

letter, in February 1854, there is this engaging little postscript: "The other day I heard the nurse say to the Baby, 'Master Plornish Maroon, there's your pa a-calling for you' ".

The letter contained the faithful invitation to a birthday celebration, but this time the dinner was to be preceded if possible by one of the country walks that Dickens loved so much that he often made the characters in his books take impossibly long ones.

Next Tuesday is my birthday. We purpose on that Great National occasion going down to Waite's at Gravesend, and there dining at 5 o'clock. Will you join us? Or do you think you could manage a whole holiday? In that case we would go freshly down by steamer early in the morning, walk to Dorchester, and return through Cobham woods—taking a clean pair of boots for comfort's sake, in a carpet bag.

Once more after an interval the invitation to the seaside follows the dinner. Dickens had

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again taken a house at Boulogne, the Villa du Camp de Droite and had been working there at *Hard Times.*

You shall be received on Wednesday with open arms. And if you don't come for a much longer stay than you made last year, I shall cut off the "cu-ra-çoa and Bis-kits", as a mark of my dissatisfaction.

Dickens and Thackeray, a contemporary caricature of the great rival novelists.

All you will have to do in that official strainer through which you are filtered on landing, will be to say (in English if you prefer it), "Monsieur, I have no passport", and to produce your card with this written on it—"Restant chez M. Charles Dickens, Villa du Camp de Droite, Boulogne". You will be passed on immediately. As soon as you are let out by the cocked hats, at a little door, exclaim majestically "Monsieur Van Loo!" A being of semi-official, semi-military aspect, with a capacity of speaking English, will then appear, to whom you will deliver your card, your key, a verbal description of your portmanteau, and the magic name of your host. Smiles will illuminate his visage; you will have no more trouble about your baggage; and will pass lightly on, until cheered still further by a countenance radiantly expressive of intellect and benevolence—need I say whose?

The weather has turned deliciously cool, and fires are pleasant here. Though your visit has been so long postponed, I hope you may be here after all in the most agreeable time of *this* year. We had a bright day yesterday with a sharp north wind blowing—the perfection of a noble autumn day. It has been very hot through the summer, though at this height the air has been almost always fresh.

I will not detract from the agreeable effect I shall produce upon you, by letting off any small news at present. We shall all be most heartily glad to see you—which is no news, and may therefore be mentioned.

The Plornish Maroon is in a brilliant state; beating all former babies into what they call in America (I don't know why) sky-blue fits. He thinks you will be interested with the camp, in reference to which the most ridiculous thing I know is the practice of the Trumpeters—of whom there appear to be about two to every Private. These unfortunates have been dispersed, all through the summer, in lonely cornfields, bean-crops, pasture-lands, and bye-places of all sorts, incessantly blowing their lives away, and never doing any one of the calls right. One weazen little burnt up youth from the South, practised on the road outside our garden gate, all through July and August, when the heat was intense. Two shaggy and immense creatures with enormous beards—so broad across the chest that you couldn't take into your eye their two rows of buttons at once—instructed him. They marched up and down gravely, with him between them. Without the least effort, they blew such prodigious blasts that the old High Tower shook to every note. Then they left off, eyed this imbecile severely, and he broke into a miserable little cracked edition of a brazen wheeze, and trembled with the effort. I suppose him to have gasped himself into the Hospital and to be now no more.

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In a letter dated March, 1855, from Tavistock House, we hear for the first time of his reading from his books. He had given a public reading some two years before at Birmingham for charity and after that was naturally harried by requests to do so, to which he generously yielded as many as he could. His paid readings did not begin till 1858.

I am going down next Tuesday (I have been going for three years), to read the *Carol* to the Railway Workpeople at Ashford. Lemon and Wills are going too. We purpose starting by the 11.30 Fast Train, getting a country stroll, dining at the Inn (to the dire confusion of various intended hospitalities) and coming home by the Mail in the night. I can frank the party up and down the Railway. If you should be able to spare the day and would like the expedition, will you come?

"MOLLY AND THE OLD MAN"

From Frank Stone's illustrations for "The Haunted Man", another of the Christmas series.

Maclise's cover for "The Chimes."

On July sixth he asks Beard to come to another of his theatrical undertakings, a charity performance of *The Lighthouse* at Campden House. This was a melodrama written by Wilkie Collins, for which Stanfield painted the scenery.

The Swell Amateurs who do the Afterpiece, have so wholesome a dread of the Inimitable, and the Inimitable is so strict about the keeping of the Stage, that the said Inimitable feels bound to uphold his own laws. Therefore he considers that everybody who is "behind" must have something to do in that sacred ground. Now if you will do the wind (it is only to turn the handle of a machine), there you are—in office!

But, in order to blow with distinguishment, it will be necessary on Monday evening (when there is a Dress Rehearsal) to rehearse the storm before the people come in, under the auspices of Charley whom I have trained to the government of the Elements. . . .

If you could have seen me yesterday, with a wretched Idiot (of large property) who was yaw-yawing through the part of a French Viscount, with a walking stick of private life—how

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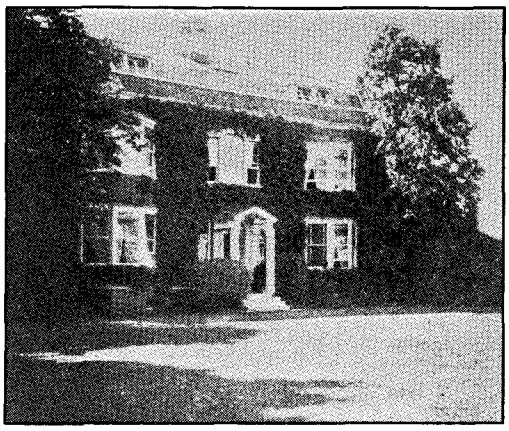


GAD'S HILL PLACE

From early youth Dickens had dreamed of owning this house on the Dover Road between Gravesend and Rochester. He bought it in 1856 and spent his last years there.

it was necessary to take his walking stick away from him, and impound the same—and how he was pulled up, and driven on, and pushed in, and turned round and forced on, and taken off, like a sort of Image until at last he fell into a kind of moral drunkenness, and staggered about in mere moonstruck imbecility—you would have wondered as much as I did (or, I suppose, he did), why the Devil he ever came there.

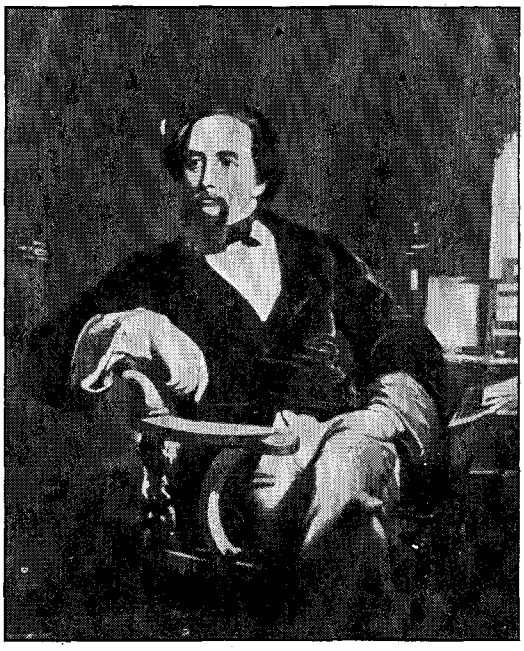
The third letter of this year is dated October seventh from Folkestone, where Dickens spent the autumn before going to Paris for the winter.

Next Thursday, I shall be in Town, to preside at a dinner to Thackeray. Consequently Sir, you will have the goodness to come back with me *next Friday* by Day-Express at half-past one. Various light restoratives shall be prepared, and if I don't screw that peg up something higher in four and twenty hours—never believe in me again.

It blew a gale of wind last night, and Stone and Egg went across in the Steamer this morning. With a heavy Sou'wester rolling in about five-and-thirty feet high, the old Dig of Digs persisted in assuring me (wagging his head from side to side), that "it wasn't rough, my boy". The passengers were all put below—the Captain having some unaccountable impression that it wasn't smooth—they went out, with the sea curling over the masts and raining down the funnel—and the last sound I heard before they dashed into the uproar and confusion was Stone in the midst of a perfect Stonehenge of white basins, contradicting the Steward.

I cannot discover the occasion of the dinner to Thackeray but as the last number of *Pendennis* had appeared in August 1855 it may have been that. Egg was Augustus Leopold Egg, then A.R.A. and afterwards R.A., a subject painter, four years younger than Dickens. Stone was Frank Stone, A.R.A., born in 1830, who frequently took part in Dickens's theatricals. He was the father of Marcus Stone, R.A., who drew pictures for *A Tale of Two Cities* (as a complete work, not for the numbers) and for *Great Expectations*.

There follows a gap of two years and then we find Dickens indignant and sympathetic over Beard's loss of his work on the *Morn-*



DICKENS IN 1859

From the portrait by W. A. Frith, R.A., in the Forster Collection.

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ing Herald and trying to help him with Delane, the famous editor of *The Times*.

Twenty-Fourth February, 1857.

My dear Beard,

I had heard of the first calamity, but not of the second. Your letter is a painful surprise to me in so far as it concerns your own treatment —if I can say, without making an ass of yourself, that anything would surprise me in that association.

If Saturday evening will suit you equally well, let me propose that we dine at the Garrick at 6. We will be alone of course. A glass of good wine may take the taste of that Scum out of our mouths—and it must be pretty strong in yours by this time. If this should not suit you, of course I am at your disposal in the morning of the same day; but the evening is better as being more like one of our old Saturdays. Write me just a word in reply.

I went down yesterday to look at your country quarters. I said when I came home at night that they would set you up: and now I feel that they are fresh enough—ah! even to get you in training for another Baldwin—if there should be another in reserve for the sons of men and Holy Church.

Don't be cast down. Cheer up, and you will soon be better for this. *If I were you I would above all things leave a card for Delane without a day's delay.*

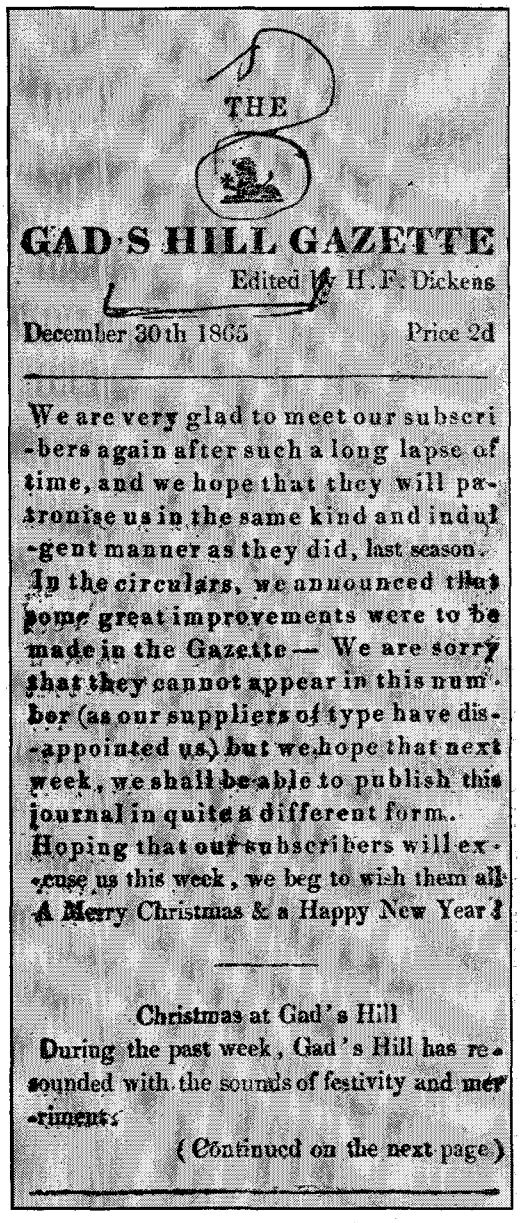
You need do no more—but do that.

Ever heartily,

C. D.

In April there is an invitation to meet Delane at dinner but, as far as we can tell now, nothing came of it. It is pleasant to know however that in the end Beard was at least reasonably prosperous. Dickens suggested to him that he might get some public employment "on a reference to the Inimitable as an old fellow-'prentice". He did finally get something of the sort, for he became "Court Newsman" and held this post for a number of years.

Thomas Beard survived Dickens by many years and Mr. Walter Dexter, the learned



THE

GAD'S HILL GAZETTE

Edited by H. F. Dickens

December 30th 1865 Price 2d

We are very glad to meet our subscribers again after such a long lapse of time, and we hope that they will patronise us in the same kind and indulgent manner as they did, last season. In the circulars, we announced that some great improvements were to be made in the Gazette — We are sorry that they cannot appear in this number (as our suppliers of type have disappointed us) but we hope that next week, we shall be able to publish this journal in quite a different form. Hoping that our subscribers will excuse us this week, we beg to wish them all A Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!

Christmas at Gad's Hill

During the past week, Gad's Hill has resounded with the sounds of festivity and merriment;

(Continued on the next page)

During his holidays, young Henry Fielding Dickens edited a four-page household paper. This corrected proof shows the first known use of Dickens's newly adopted crest. (Courtesy of the American Art Association-Anderson Galleries, Inc.

Editor of *The Dickensian*, tells me that there is some evidence of his being alive in 1895.

A month after the invitation to meet

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Dickens and his daughters at Gad's Hill.

Delane, Beard is asked to Gad's Hill Place, which Dickens had bought the year before. The purchase money, £1790, had been paid over in March 1851; a good deal of money had to be spent on it besides and the work of improvement went on for several years. Dickens actually got possession of the house in February 1857, and stayed at Waite's Hotel, Gravesend, while the alterations were going on. The cold meat alluded to in the letter must have been in the nature of a picnic.

The train which will bring down the compact body of attackers of cold meat for the first time, "on the premises", will leave London Bridge Station on Tuesday afternoon at 3.40. If you came by that, you would take a return ticket for Gravesend. But you were saying you would have the whole day in the country. Being still in that mind (and able to walk a mile to my Numble abode), take ticket for Higham, one station beyond this. Then, *by return of post*, let me know, *in a note addressed here*, by what train you intend to come to Higham and the Inimitable Kentish Freeholder will be on the spot to receive you.

Dickens was obviously pleased with the little joke about the Kentish Freeholder, for he had used it before, signing a letter to Forster in February "the Kentish Freeholder on his native heath, his name Protection"—an ending reminiscent of one of Mr. Micawber's, which all students of *David Copperfield* will know.

On April 5, 1858, Dickens tells Beard that he means in future to give paid readings and he did in fact begin to do so with Mr. Arthur Smith as his manager on April 29th.

It has become so impossible to comply with these reading Petitions, and the readings attract such very large audiences, that I have all but decided (between ourselves) to read on for my own profit. In that case, I shall read *The Cricket, The Chimes, The Haunted Man*, at this same place, in May; and you will have, you may be sure, timely notice of being free of the Temple.

It was a wonderful go, in Edinburgh, certainly the most intelligent audience (2000 strong) I have ever had to do with: and shewing a capacity of being affected by the pathetic parts, such as I never saw before.

The reading at Edinburgh mentioned was clearly a charity one, but when he went there later in the year on his first tour he was equally pleased with his audience. "The people", he wrote to Forster, "had to be got in through such a crowd as rendered it a work of the utmost difficulty to keep an alley into the room. They were seated about me on the platform, put into the doorway of the waiting room, squeezed into every conceivable place, and a multitude turned away once more. I think I am better pleased with what was done in Edinburgh than with what has been done anywhere, almost."

On April seventeenth Dickens says that he is sending two stalls for each of the readings at St. Martin's Hall and adds: "I hope I shall never miss my old friend's face". Beard how-

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ever, was laid up and could not go; so on May first Dickens writes him a little account:

They crammed 70 more people into the place, the other night, than were ever got into it before—though we were quite clear, on the Children's Hospital Night, that one more could by no means be crammed in. I think some people are a little afraid of *The Chimes*. To tell you the truth, I am—as yet—a little so myself, for I *cannot* yet (and I have been at it all the morning) command sufficient composure at some of the more affecting parts, to project them with the necessary force, the requisite distance. I must harden my heart, like Lady Macbeth.

Apropos of the last sentence it may be interesting to give the subjects of his readings during this first tour. They were the *Carol*, *The Chimes*, the Trial in *Pickwick*, little Paul Dombey, Boots at the Holly Tree Inn, Dick Doubledick, and Mrs. Gamp. The success was everywhere enormous. One feels today that Forster's judgment must have been sound, namely that Dickens's strength lay in "the quickness, variety and completeness of his assumption of character" rather than in "the pathos or grave level passages". However, notions of pathos have changed somewhat since those days and no doubt the pathetic passages, which put a terrible strain on the reader, were immensely popular.

On October 14, 1858, Dickens writes Beard a hasty line, between getting home from Glasgow and leaving for Bradford, and encloses a newspaper cutting and a program:

The Inimitable's success, enormous. Between ourselves, the clear profits of the readings, after payment of all the charges, which are necessarily heavy, one thousand pounds per month!

Six days later comes another letter from Birmingham with a further allusion to the readings:

I took it into my head last night, to read the Trial from *Pickwick* here. It was a great go. And when Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz said "Call Samuel Weller!" they gave a great thunder of applause, as if he were really coming in.

Finally at the end of the year is a charming and warm-hearted little letter with a New Year present:

My dear Beard,

I send up my best wishes to my old friend for a happy New Year, and many happier years. And I send with them, half a dozen of an old liqueur brandy not easy to get. Remember me in it.

Ever faithfully and affectionately,

CHARLES DICKENS.

(*To be concluded*)

A drawing by the youthful Dickens: "The Two Faquirs and the Ducks". The "faquirs'" headdresses suggest that Dickens may have mixed his Indian types.
(*Courtesy of the American Art Association-Anderson Galleries, Inc.*)

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A MONTH OF THE THEATRE

"MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA"

by Francis Fergusson

Because of the author's ambitions, because of its formidable length, and because of the furore it created among the reviewers, Mr. O'Neill's new trilogy, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, is evidently the chief event of the season, and I have decided to devote this month's chronicle to an account of it.

What Mr. O'Neill was trying to do was write "a modern psychological drama using one of the old legend-plots of Greek tragedy for its basic theme", as he says in his notes for the play. The legend he finally selected was that of the House of Atreus, and the Greek tragedies that his plays most nearly resemble are Æschylus's *Agamemnon, The Libation Bearers*, and *The Eumenides*. Agamemnon, you remember, was one of the kings who led the attack on Troy, and, after ten years, came home unscathed and victorious. Æschylus's first play is about his return with Cassandra, the Trojan prophetess, to his wife Clytaemestra. Cassandra, with her gift of second sight, perceives not only the gory history of Agamemnon's family (which included the sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia, so the gods would send a favouring breeze and enable the chieftains to sail to Troy)—but also the perils that await her and Agamemnon in the house. Clytaemestra, in fact, has taken a kinsman of Agamemnon's, Ægisthus, for a lover, and plans to kill her husband. She gets both Cassandra and Agamemnon indoors, and murders them there. She then reappears on the porch and defends her conduct to the chorus, on the ground that her murder of her husband is just punishment for his sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenia. The second play, *The Libation Bearers*, shows how Electra and Orestes, daughter and son of Agamemnon and Clytaemestra, meet at their father's tomb, and, invoking his ghost and with the aid of the chorus of serfs, murder their mother and Ægisthus. They regarded this murder as an act of piety, but they have offended the Eumenides, or Furies, spirits of fertility and night, who punish all who slay their blood-relations. The third play, *The Eumenides,* represents the trial of Orestes *versus* the Furies, which is finally decided in favour of Orestes by Athena, goddess of wisdom. The question was whether Orestes was justified in avenging his father's murder, even on his mother: the Furies say no, as it is forbidden to hurt one's blood-kin; but Athena, who had no mother, decides that greater honour is due the father, the real parent of the child, than the mother; and so brings to an end the feuds that split the House of Atreus.

Mr. O'Neill's three plays are called *Homecoming, The Hunted*, and *The Haunted.* They are laid in a New England clipper-ship town just after the Civil War. The Civil War corresponds to the Trojan War; Brigadier-General Mannon to Agamemnon; his wife Christine to Clytaemestra, Captain

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Adam Brant to Ægisthus, and Lavinia and Orin to Electra and Orestes.

In *Homecoming* we learn that Christine is of foreign parentage, and has never loved her Puritanical husband the Brigadier-General. In his absence she has taken Brant for a lover, seduced by his tales of South Sea Isles, where there is no repressive Puritanism, and where there is "the warm earth in the moonlight, the trade winds rustling the coco palms", and so forth. But Lavinia is a chip of the old Mannon block; she ferrets out her mother's romance, and, by a kind of blackmail, makes her mother promise to dismiss Brant and live with her husband again. (Lavinia's real though unconscious motive is jealousy: she covets Brant and his coco palms for herself. But we do not learn this until three or four hours later.) Christine gets poison from Brant, and waits for her husband to return. But when the General appears almost the first thing he says—gray beard, epaulettes and all—is, "I want life! Maybe you could love me now!" It seems the poor fellow's eyes had been opened, while he was away at war, to the fact that he had been missing "life". He has several scenes with his wife on this theme, and they are among the best in the plays, grotesque though they are, with the grizzled veteran repressing a whimper, or sitting up in bed, in his nightshirt, pleading for love. They are affecting, at their best, these scenes, because of some curious, *maladif* quality of sincerity: their bewilderment at least is genuine, like the cry of a lost child. The General's conversion comes too late to save him: Christine gives him the poison.

Mr. O'Neill is at his best when he writes of decaying Puritan New England and its sexual maladjustments. According to the old Calvinist theology, Grace is an arbitrary act of the Deity, and there are no gradations between the saved and the damned. As religious faith in this doctrine weakened, the harsh dichotomy became a worldly opposition between the hide-bound pillars of society, who obeyed the rules and were absolutely right, and the unconventional, the sinners, who were absolutely wrong. All that was then needed to produce the current hue and cry about "Puritanism" was that the values should be inverted, while the old oversimplified separation of mankind into the sheep and the goats was preserved. Thus for Mr. O'Neill and his ilk, freedom from the "rules" of sexual morality (called inhibitions) became the one means of salvation. *Desire Under the Elms*, one of Mr. O'Neill's best plays, was built on a similar theme and painted in the same crude blacks and whites of melodrama. In that play the California of Gold Rush days was used to symbolize "freedom" and to contrast with poor, repressed old New England. In the present trilogy the South Sea Islands that Melville described in his early novels, with their sunshine and their naked savages, take the place of California. It is when Mr. O'Neill tackles this theme that one most feels he has a background and an objective problem to deal with. It will do, in a way, for some stagnant Puritan backwaters. It is also right enough, sincere enough, for "life" as he sees it. That is his strength, but also his weakness; for as long as he remains on that level his trouble will produce nightmares, not tragedies; they will remain (though true for him) undigested, like a rich meal on a weak stomach. This becomes extremely evident in the second and third plays.

"Is it possible to get modern psychological approximation of Greek sense of fate into such a play, which an intelligent audience of today, possessed by no belief in gods or supernatural retribution, could accept and be

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moved by?" Mr. O'Neill asks himself in his notes. In *The Hunted* one sees his psychological fate at work. Orin returns from the war in time for the funeral, and Lavinia and Christine proceed to fight for him. Orin is attached to his mother by an "Œdipus-complex" or "mother-fixation", and his dream is to go away and live in one of the South Sea Isles with her. When she holds him tight and strokes his hair, he believes she is an angel, and that everything Lavinia tells him about her is a lie. But when Lavinia tells him she took Brant for a lover, she drives him wild with jealous rage. Lavina arranges for him to eavesdrop on a tryst between Christine and Brant, and he murders Brant. When Christine finds that she has lost Brant, and when she sees the hatred in her children's eyes, she commits suicide.

Such is the story of *The Hunted*. In what sense can it be said to approximate the Greeks? When Æschylus wrote his tragedies, he used a story which Homer had told some five hundred years before. According to M. Bérard, Homer's stories were already traditional in his day. Æschylus's story and characters, therefore, while still very much alive, had already been accepted by his audience as significant, as symbolic, far beyond the significance of any family feud. This is an advantage for making a theme seem "fated" and inevitable which no writer of modern psychological drama enjoys.

The family itself in ancient Greece was important as the family in modern times has never been, as one learns from Fustel de Coulanges's book, *La Cité antique*. The ancient Greek religion was a species of ancestor worship; their piety was a piety toward the family hearth; immortality itself was for them much more a matter of the continuity of the family line, from ancestors to unborn heirs, than it was of any personal survival in their rather misty Hades. Moreover, the *order* of the family, whereby the dead as well as the living received their due of honour, seems to have been for the ancient Greeks the symbol of all spiritual order. It became the foundation of such city-states as Æschylus's Athens. And Æschylean tragedy grew out of ceremonies in honour of the ancestors.

Thus what was at stake in Æschylus's second play, *The Libation Bearers*, was the deepest values the Greeks knew. The chorus, representing the city, is almost as much interested in the slaying of Clytaemestra as Orestes and Electra. The gods had seen fit to cleave the patriarchal order in two by the feud between mother and father; but—and here is the important point—this malevolent fate had not destroyed the personal freedom of Electra and Orestes to follow the highest motives they knew. O'Neill's fate is inside his characters; it is, I am afraid, nothing more cosmic than a complex—artistically a poor bodiless substitute for the Eumenides, "like Gorgons, stoled in sable garb, entwined with swarming snakes"; and ethically, of course, quite without significance. "Psychological fate" is nothing but the crudest determinism: to accept it on Mr. O'Neill's terms is to confuse Evil with pathology, and so destroy all the meaning (except for the psychotherapist) of his characters' actions.

In *The Haunted* Mr. O'Neill springs all his psychological traps. Lavinia and Orin are left to make what they can of their lives; but it is evident in advance that, if there is to be a tragic dénouement, their maladjustments will "get them". When the play opens they have just returned from a trip to the inevitable South Seas, where Lavinia has been kissed by a savage chieftain. This kiss—a dangerous exercise with an O'Neill Puritan—opens Lavinia's eyes to what she has been missing all these years, and she determines

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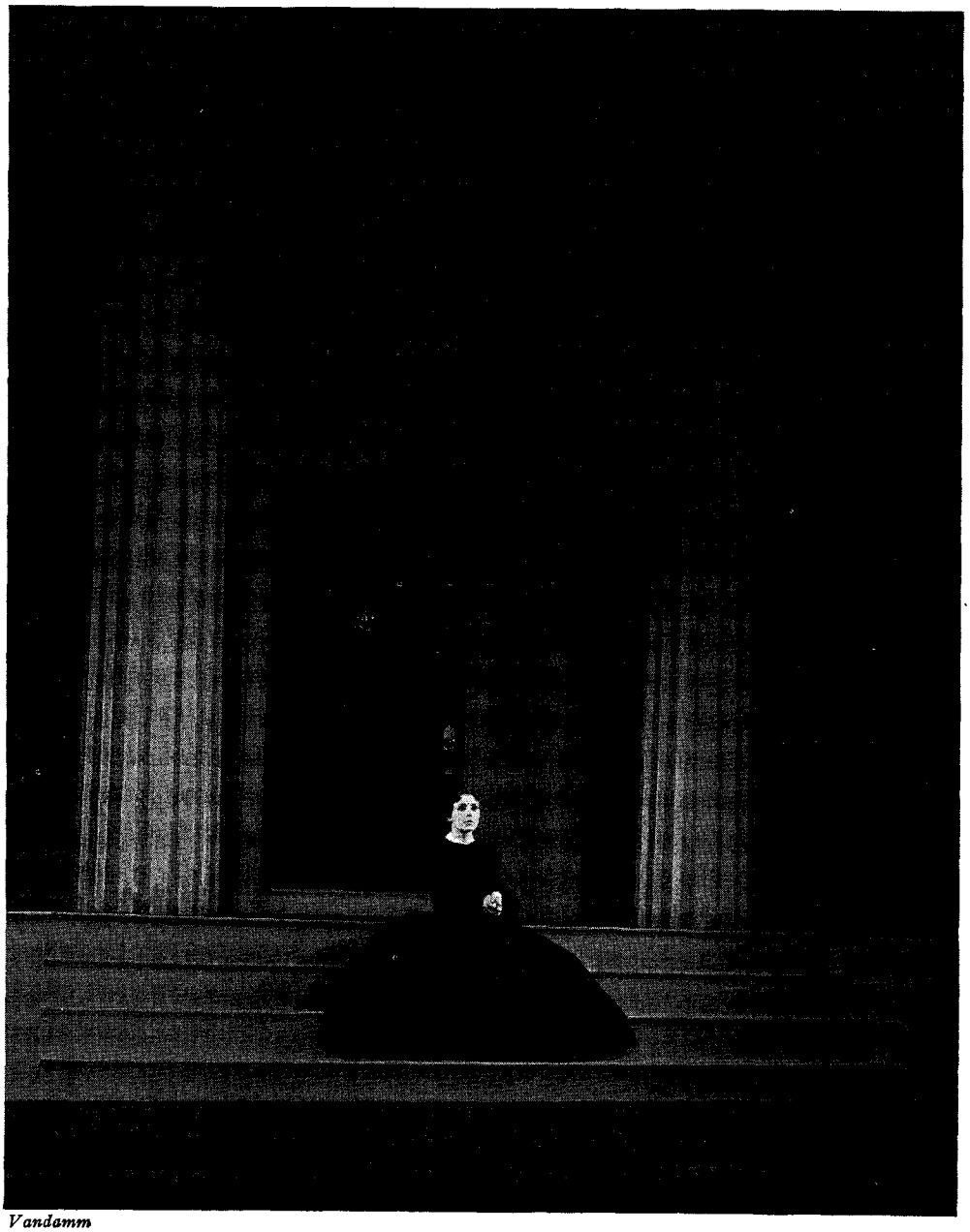

Vandamm

"MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA"

Alice Brady as Lavinia Mannon, the counterpart of Electra in Eugene O'Neill's trilogy of New England life based on the Greek dramatists. (Setting by Robert Edmond Jones.)

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to marry Peter, the neighbour's upstanding son. Orin, she thinks, had better marry Hazel. He is in love with Hazel in a way, but he can't get rid of his remorse, nor of the incestuous bond which still chains him to his dead mother. Lavinia is afraid to let him out of the house for fear he will confess to the murder of Brant and ruin both their lives. Thus Orin comes to stand, in his weakness, between Lavinia and her marriage with Peter, and presently he reads in her eyes that she has an unconscious desire to murder him. At the same time he is prey to an "Electra-complex" or "sister-fixation", so that he helplessly does whatever she tells him. She dismisses Hazel; their love-hate relation becomes intolerable; she calls him a coward, and, as he cannot bear the disapproval of one he loves so deeply and guiltily, he shoots himself as she intended he should. This leaves Lavinia, still trying to live by the light she got from the chieftain's kiss. She tries to marry Peter; but just as they are growing amorous at last, what does she do but call him, by a Freudian *lapsus linguae*, Adam Brant! So there it is again, that wicked psychological fate, in the shape, this time, of an incestuous attachment to her mother's lover. It proves to her that she is not good, but bad; not white, but black. Peter is white, and, like the good melodramatic cliché he is, he runs like a rabbit when he sees that his beloved has a spot of dark colour. "Such a character [as Electra]", Mr. O'Neill says in his notes, "contained too much tragic fate within her Soul to permit" anything but a tragic ending. Accordingly he has her go into the house and close the shutters: "There's no one left to punish me," she tells the hired man. "I'm the last Mannon. I've got to punish myself! Living alone here with the dead is a worse act of justice than death or prison! I'll never go out or see anyone!"

Who can say what the celestial debates in Æschylus's third and final play, *The Eumenides*, meant to his audience? Did they believe that the goddess of wisdom had intervened and determined for all time the supremacy of the father? Were gods and furies real to them as people are real, or were they symbolic of spiritual realities, or did they attach some subtler, inexplicit, more simply artistic significance to those great figures? Whatever one may think of these questions —and I am not trying to interpret Æschylus —it seems certain that the effect of *The Eumenides* is to make us feel that the evils of the house of Atreus are digested, seen in their proper perspective, seen in relation to a cosmic order. Perhaps a Greek went away from a performance of *The Eumenides* with a feeling of exalted serenity, such as one may now get from Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion*; for the action of the play is on the level of religious faith.

Mr. O'Neill's plays, instead of the tragic weight of the poor, unsuccessful human effort to order life, have at best the thin piteousness of those who have never been able to grow up enough to begin to live. It is indeed pathetic how families do thwart their children. This much we may take from Mr. O'Neill for what it is worth, and yet protest at the bad taste, the solemnity, with which it is offered. It is the nature of adolescent nightmares to look much blacker to their victims than to anyone else—they look much blacker than human life, objectively considered, possibly can to anyone who consents to live. It is here that the bad taste comes in, the bad taste of confusing the psychological with the ethical plane, the bad taste of offering a case history in the trappings of classical tragedy.

But it is, after all, as "modern psychological drama" that these plays are offered, and

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as such that they must be judged. It is a good thing that a modern dramatist should study the Greeks, and one may grant that the continuity and theatrical effectiveness of Mr. O'Neill's mere situations owe much to the classic legend; and to those who know the legend his plays may offer the pleasure of contemplating a completed action known from the beginning. However, no modern drama embodies values comparable to those of Greek tragedy, for the reason that there is no such publicly established value to appeal to. The novels of Henry James deal with themes of ethical importance; James Joyce's one play, *Exiles*, does also; but its values are so subtly, so esoterically represented that it is doubtful whether they could ever reach any considerable modern audience. From this point of view, Mr. O'Neill's plays belong somewhere in the neighbourhood of Andreyev and Strindberg, and I should say that the values in *Mourning Becomes Electra* were comparable with those in *The Father*.

But as an artist Mr. O'Neill is far below even his contemporaries. The characters of Æschylus are perhaps simpler, more massive than life; a good playwright like Mr. Paul Green will make you believe his characters as people; but Mr. O'Neill's characters, with their pseudo-scientific skeletons, are more abstract than life. As a craftsman, we see that his feverish scenes are interspersed with long dull stretches; as a writer of English, we see that he uses a language which is wrong for the New England of Melville and Hawthorne as it is wrong for our own day: it, too, is abstract, and awkward as technical prose is awkward.

Plays like this, which are without poetry, and live at best not in their own right but with the strained life of their author, are very difficult to produce. Mr. Moeller's idea, at the Theatre Guild, seems to have been to try to hit something between modern realism and classic formality. Miss Alice Brady, the Lavinia, inclines toward classic restraint, and, as a result of her conception of this quality, is left without emotion for the high points the author prescribed. I remembered her standing around rather stiffly and sleep-walking through the climaxes; but she may have been tired out on the second day. Mr. Lee Baker gives a good realistic performance as General Mannon. Mr. Earle Larimore presents as usual a rather hysterical young man, which seems to be about what the part calls for. Only Madame Nazimova manages to put life into those violent situations of Mr. O'Neill's. It is here that her training in Strindberg and Andreyev stands her in good stead. She is genuinely moving with her mixture of love and hate; and where the others, called upon to fluctuate within the wide limits of the neurotic, tend to be merely inconsistent, she fuses her part on some deeper, more human level.

I left the Guild Theatre, at ten minutes past eleven, with the oppressed certainty that I had been through something. I believe this was due to Mr. Robert Edmond Jones's settings as much as any element in the production. His painted curtain showing the Mannon House against a cloudy sky, in a park with pine trees and an iron fence, gradually impresses one as genuinely funereal. The house itself, filling the whole proscenium opening, with its gray walls, its pitch-black doors and windows, its high, ugly porch, goes far toward providing the style and poetry which the play lacks. It in effect holds the play together in spite of itself, insists gravely on its deepest intentions.

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THE BACKGROUND OF "BROOME STAGES"

by Elizabeth C. Moore

WHEN Alice and the strange birds and animals emerged dripping from the Pool of Tears in Wonderland, it was the Mouse's helpful idea to dry them off by reciting a passage from a school history. "William the Conqueror, whose cause was favoured by the Pope, was soon submitted to . . ." And when the animals protested that they were bored, he sulked: "This is the driest thing I know". How cordially most of us would agree with him about the history of England's sovereigns during the eleventh and the twelfth centuries! A dreary procession of puppets, quarrelling, crusading, gathering at Runnymede, puppets who for all the efforts of the historian have never quite come to life. It has remained for a novelist to breathe into the Normans and the Plantagenets a vitality and dramatic interest that recreate them as real personalities.

Miss Clemence Dane's *Broome Stages* (Doubleday, Doran. $3.00) is immeasurably more than a long novel about a family that dominated the English theatre for two hundred years. What lies beneath the story of the Broomes is hinted at in the dedication, but so few readers ever look at the dedication page that it is doubtful whether the underlying significance of this novel will not slip by most persons. "A play about the Plantagenets", the author says in the dedication, is "really a novel about the Broomes". And if we read the book with this hint in mind, we shall discover a rich meaning in a thousand situations and relationships—far richer than any meaning revealed to the inattentive reader who takes the story at its surface value. But the maximum enjoyment is reserved for him who commands the patience to read it with continual cross-reference to the cyclopedia or to some fairly complete text-book of English history; only in this way will he appreciate the striking parallelism between the two periods and the brilliant success of the author in dramatizing the parallel.

For Miss Dane's Broome family, substitute the Norman dukes and kings and their Plantagenet heirs; for her eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, substitute the eleventh and the twelfth; for the Broomes' rise to theatrical supremacy, substitute the Plantagenet struggle for absolute political power —and in *Broome Stages* you have pure history. Here is the Plantagenet character: its enterprise, its driving vigour, its litigiousness. Here, translated into the life of London from 1715 to our own day, are the contests and jealousies, the treacheries and loyalties, of Norman and Plantagenet during the two centuries ending with 1200.

How remarkable this correspondence is, down to the minutest detail, can best be seen in the genealogical table that complements these notes. The Broome side could be superimposed on the other with almost complete identity, the variations being negligible. Miss Dane has shifted two or three relationships and changed a few names—that is all. The

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essential situation in its progressive stages, the characters of the persons, the motives that drive them, are identical. This means much more than that the author's psychology is skilful; it means that, after all, those Plantagenets were not puppets but people.

To find the first Richard Broome's prototype we must go back to the Conqueror's grandfather, Richard II, Duke of Normandy early in the eleventh century. (Query: if the author decided to begin her chronicle with the Normans, why—considering her pseudonym—did she not include some Danes as well?) Richard Broome's second marriage produced a Robert; the Duke's son was Robert the Devil. Each of these Roberts had a William, the Norman William being the Conqueror. We may note that, on the Broome side, Richard's earlier marriage—to Phoebe—and the numerous Wybird clan produced by her grand-daughter Hilaret are not paralleled on the historical side. William Broome married his cousin Lettice Wybird; and it is a safe guess that the daughter of Baldwin of Flanders, Matilda, whom William the Conqueror married, was his cousin. By the date of these marriages we have reached the middle of the eleventh and the eighteenth centuries respectively, and both Williams are well launched on the conquering careers that are going to win leadership for their dynasties. And from William's marriage—in each case—sprang the first Henry.

Look at the children of these William marriages. On the Norman side, Robert, William Rufus, Henry, Adela. On the Broome side there is no parallel for Adela, but the others are Robert, Russel, Harry; the red-haired Russel obviously standing for William Rufus. (The omission of Adela and her Blois marriage is going to be made up for later.) Both Henry the king and Harry the actor marry twice, both going outside of their own countries for the first wife, both having no children by the second. Henry I married Edith Matilda of Scotland, called Maud, and had by her a boy and a girl. Harry Broome married Maud Blythe of Ireland and had by her a boy and a girl. The king's second wife was Adelaide of Louvain; Harry's second wife was Adelaide Wybird.

As these children grow up the story becomes more detailed and more dramatic; both boy and girl constitute problems for their parents. Henry's daughter Matilda is one of England's earliest strong-minded women, passionate, vigorous, thwarted; so is Harry's girl Domina (and here is our first changed name). As for the king's son, William the Aetheling, his story is familiar to all of us: how strong were his father's affection and hopes for the boy, their journey home from France, the wreck of the "White Ship" on which the son was travelling, the drowning of William before his father's eyes, and Henry's bitter and unappeasable grief. So, too, with Harry Broome; for his son William (called Gilly) was drowned when the *Sylvania* went down, and Harry, too, "never smiled again".

The life of Matilda-Domina furnishes just as interesting a parallel. Matilda was married off by her ambitious father to the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V, an elderly man who lived only a few years after his marriage. On her return to England she was promptly married again, this time to Geoffrey of Anjou, son of the only man her father really feared. Bear in mind the name of this bridegroom, and his origin: Geoffrey, of Anjou and Maine, whose chief city was Angers. The line is known as the Angevin, though better by the name Plantagenet, from Geoffrey's trick of wearing in his cap a sprig of broom—the *plante genêt* or *planta genista* of the country.

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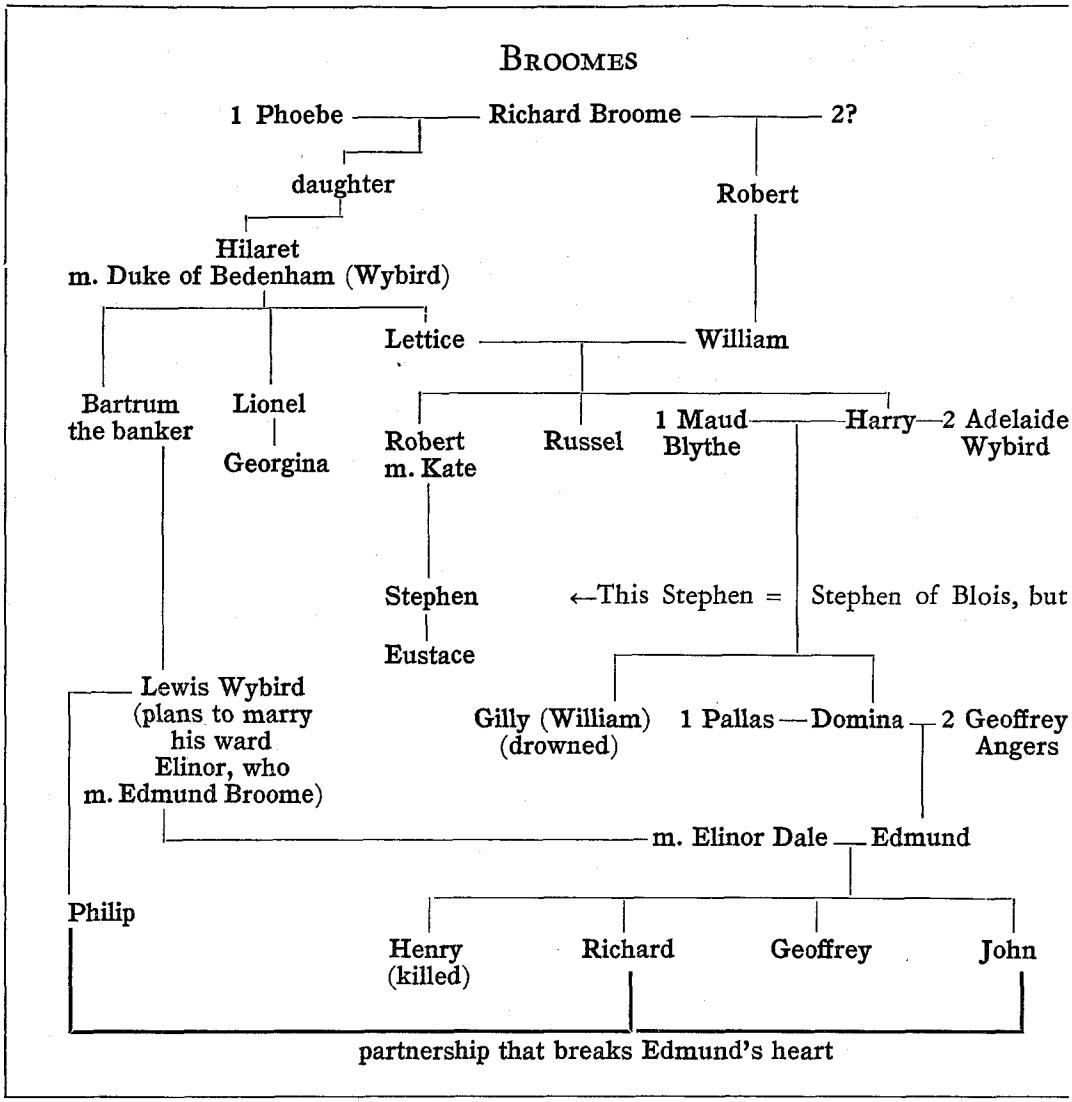

As for Matilda's parallel in the early nineteenth century, Domina Broome married first an elderly Irish lord, Pallas, and went to live on his estates, not coming home again until after his death nearly three years afterward. Like Matilda, she had no children by this first marriage. Her second marriage was to Geoffrey Angers, an American from New England; from across the water, you see, as in Matilda's case (from Maine perhaps?)—and from a cognate people. The parallel is almost exact; but it may be carried farther.

One of the high points of interest in the first half of the twelfth century in England is the career of Matilda after her father's death. Henry, robbed of his boy, had bequeathed the succession to Matilda. But his powerful barons were of another mind in this matter, and London had its own ideas, too. Though the Salic law did not run in England it exercised a certain influence from its stronghold on the Continent—just enough

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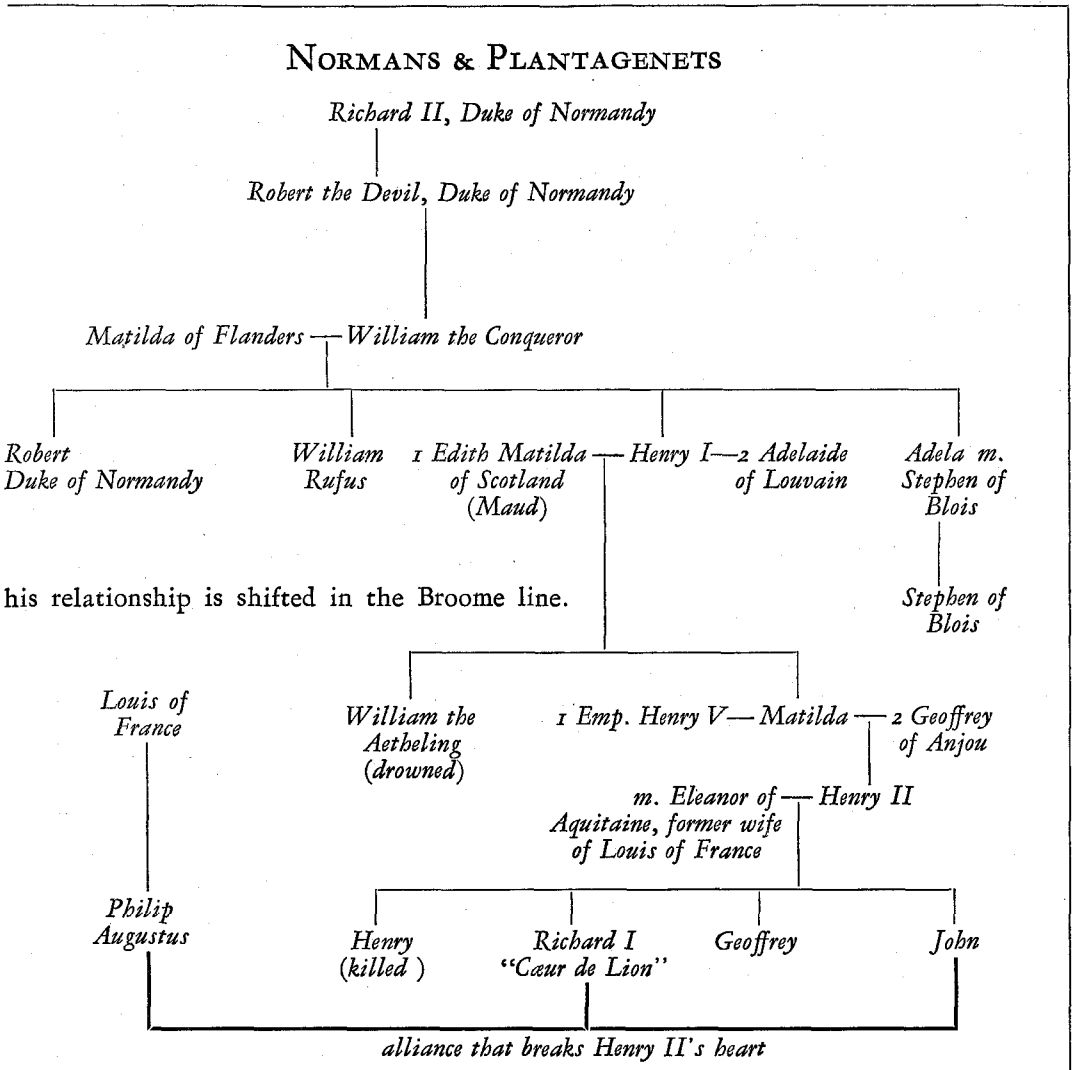

to make it hard for a woman to succeed direct, if not enough to bar a man whose claim came through a woman. In this case the man was Stephen of Blois, Matilda's cousin, whose mother had been Henry's sister Adela. And the barons—or a good many of them—voted for Stephen. Matilda, however, had the support of a considerable section of the country, and she was a woman to fight for her rights. The nineteen years after Henry's death in 1135, consequently, furnish one of the earliest melodramas in English history. The text-books call Stephen the king during that period; but enough English folk thought of Matilda as their ruler to give Stephen a run for his money. The two fought here, there, and everywhere, Matilda growing fiercer and fiercer in the fight as her boy Henry grew to maturity. When at last Stephen was crowned, in 1154, his triumph was short, for he died soon afterward, and Matilda's son became Henry II.

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As for Domina Broome, seven hundred years later, she had the same sort of contest with her cousin Stephen. Only, in this case the relationship existed not through an aunt but through Uncle Robert (Robin), the playwright, who had married "Clever Kate", and whose son Stephen fought Domina for the control of the group of London theatres now owned by the Broomes—among them the Genista (if you recall that name from the Plantagenet story). Here the comparative process discovers a departure from the parallel, in the addition of a secret love affair between Stephen and Domina, which later is to lend heightened complexity to their professional and business rivalry. Domina's father Harry had hoped that the two cousins would carry on the various theatrical enterprises in united amity; he could not foresee that Domina's rage at Stephen the faithless would bear fruit in revenge, and that the powerful and prosperous theatrical business built up by generations of Broomes would be split, weakened, fought over.

"And so for some years the mad pair chased up and down the kingdom, she the hunter, he the hunted. But sometimes . . . he turned on her, and contrived to outbid her in the eternal manœuvre for position." As we read the paragraph of which this is a part, we rub our eyes: are we reading about 1850, or about 1150? For—with only the necessary translation of the Stage into the Throne—the bitter struggle between Domina and her cousin precisely repeats the warfare between Matilda and Stephen.

The next generation continues the parallel. If we look at the Broome side of the diagram we see that Bartrum Wybird, the banker, had a son Lewis, and that Lewis had a ward Elinor. Though she was much younger than he, she was wealthy, and Lewis planned to marry her. Now translate this into the corresponding situation in France. Louis the king—who by all accounts was a poor stick—wooed Eleanor of Aquitaine, the largest landholder in the realm and the wealthiest noble, and married her in 1137. (Here is another divergence: this Louis actually married his Eleanor.) A divorce followed after some years, and Eleanor at once married Henry of England, who was rumoured to have been a lover of hers some years before. From that time on, Louis never lost a chance to hurt Henry.

In nineteenth-century England the parallel story runs thus: Elinor, twenty minutes before the hour set for her marriage to the elderly Lewis (guests arrived, gifts on display, wedding dress donned), dashes from the house in disgust, and elopes with the man she loves. And this man is the counterpart of Henry the king—he is the son of Domina; only, as the diagram shows, his name is Edmund instead of Henry II. (It is curious that Miss Dane made this change, for it can hardly fail to puzzle readers whose minds may leap at once to those other and later Edmunds of York-and-Lancaster times.) But do not, as you read of this marriage, and of the growing-up of the sons of Elinor and Edmund, lose sight of the elderly Wybird whom she deserted; like Louis of France, he is to nurse his injured pride for years, and with his son is to exact his revenge in a critical hour. For Lewis Wybird ultimately got himself a wife who had no wish to run away, and his son Philip is paralleled by King Louis's son, the great Philip Augustus.

To return to the Elinor-Edmund and the Eleanor-Henry marriages. In each case the four sons were Henry, Richard, Geoffrey, and John. Henry Plantagenet was killed in battle, Richard, the brilliant one—Richard Yea-and-Nay, Cœur de Lion—hated his father, went into far countries on crusading

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adventures, returned to further and more effective attacks on Henry, and ended by allying himself with his former enemy Philip Augustus of France, in a life-and-death struggle with the English king. Compared with Richard—and even with young John—Geoffrey is rather colourless; for John joined the alliance of his brother with their father's ancient enemies, Louis and Philip Augustus, and so broke his father's heart. For it was the discovery that not only Richard was set against him but his darling youngest, John, as well, that killed the old king.

So with the four Broome boys, who bring the story to an end, in our own times. Henry, the eldest, was killed in the war. Richard never got along with his father Edmund, was reluctant to make the stage his profession, dabbled early with the fascination of the developing motion-picture business, and was altogether a difficult and rebellious son. Presently he was off to America, lured not by the Holy Land but by Hollywood; became a movie star, returned to England with ambitions to manage cinema houses, and instantly became his father's rival. The theatre's prosperity was threatened by the cinema—Edmund, like Henry, saw his crown slipping. And when he learned that the theatre building in which generations of Broomes had acted Shakespeare was to pass out of his control, and into the hands of a partnership consisting of Lewis and Philip Wybird and his own son Richard—and young John with them—his heart broke. It was the end of the Broome dominion of the English theatre—the last of the Broome Stages.

The reader of this novel whose interest in its historical parallelisms leads him to examine them in closer detail will find many more that are not mentioned here; the book is rich in half-suggestions that will reveal themselves only to the alert eye, but which add immensely to the significance of the chronicle. Here we may offer as a final illustration of identity the passage in the Encyclopaedia Britannica on Henry II—a character analysis that applies word for word to Edmund Broome. The article describes Henry as an active and able administrator, violent and capricious in temper, an unfaithful husband, an affectionate but suspicious father; temperamentally antagonistic to Richard, dotingly fond of John, and done to death when John turns against him. When we come across a passage characterizing so precisely a man of our own day, we realize that if all history could be interpreted as Miss Dane has interpreted the Plantagenet period, there would be few pages left for Alice and the Dodo and the Mouse to dry themselves with.

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ABOUT BOOK-COLLECTING

by Wilfred Partington

Penny "Bloods" and Curious Sermons

London, November.

I READ, when a schoolboy, a story which described in that wonderful style of the early Penny "Bloods" the adventures of a man who possessed the secret of making himself invisible and of transporting himself hither and thither with magic speed. I used to sit in a mullioned window of my Time-seared school (the second oldest in England); and dream of all the things I would do—publishable and unpublishable—if only I possessed that marvellous secret. The story came back to me when, prior to beginning this month's End-Papers, I wrote to a friend who has long been one of our most esteemed authors in his own learned field. Such, however, is the lure of books and book-collecting that although the author of works already classic, his secret passion in literature is—the Penny Dreadful! And I have had the experience of reading a manuscript of extraordinary size and interest from his pen dealing with this curious yellow literature so beloved by Victorian youth; and so ardently collected now by many elderly boys on both sides of the Atlantic. It will be a unique work when published; but I doubt whether its title-page will bear the author's name for many a long day. For, as he wrote when sending me the manuscript: "but please look at the 1931 *Who's Who* and imagine what people will think of such a last development".

But to hark back to my theme. I should have liked that Penny "Blood" secret of invisibility and magic transport as an aid to writing this End-Paper. It would have enabled me to realize a fond dream of visiting the private libraries of American and English bookmen to ascertain all the curious by-paths of collecting. And a personal visit to all libraries would be the only way to find out these varied and attractive by-paths. For what happens usually? A collector assembles a useful number of books on an out-of-the-way subject: and then, after a while, it is broken up and dispersed like the leaves by autumn winds. Many of these little collections are left incomplete or are capable of expansion, and I think it is a matter for regret that they are not oftener kept intact, to give other collectors the opportunity to build on them. Booksellers and auctioneers might well bear the point in mind when they have to handle a "run" of books or small collection on a special subject. To break up a "run" or nucleus collection may be advantageous for the moment: on the other hand,

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if it is acquired in its entirety the new owner would in many cases be prompted to make it the foundation of a larger collection; and so create a demand in that subject.

To give a classic example. In the beginning of the eighteenth century the Earl of Oxford, in forming his celebrated library, got together a small collection of ancient ballads. In the course of time this nucleus collection was acquired by a Mr. West. In the course of time, again, the collection was purchased by a Major Pearson, a collector who had made old English literature his study. In his possession, with the assistance of Isaac Reed, the editor of the *First Variorum Shakespeare*, the collection received very great additions; and was bound in two large volumes with printed title-pages. At the dispersal of Major Pearson's library, this collection in two volumes was secured by that great bookman, the Duke of Roxburghe, who added many ballads to it, and a third volume. At the Duke's historic sale in 1812, it was sold for £477.15. I have not had the chance to trace the collection from that time; but it is almost certain to be intact now, probably in a National Library, for at the time it was described as greatly exceeding the Pepys collection at Cambridge, and as the finest of its kind in England. The point is that here we have an example of the growth of a subject collection of rare literary value, with which the names of four collectors are honourably associated. The opportunities for this constructive collecting are far wider today than in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To be just, it must be added that the early American collectors did pursue this admirable plan, as various public libraries in the United States bear witness; and the example was followed by some of their successors. It could be emulated still more today when the tendency is rather towards "breaking up".

There is no comprehensive record of these by-paths of collecting: small collections of books on out-of-the-way subjects are here, there, and everywhere—elusive and shy, because so often they are the results of individual tastes which do not follow the more fashionable ideas; expressions of mind and habit. Various fragmentary contributions have been written on them from time to time; but it is doubtful whether there is a true appreciation of their range and infinite variety. It would, as indicated, require a Magic-Carpet round of visits to all private libraries to map these curious by-paths. I look up an old record of my own. If they are still collecting (and my data is fairly recent) there is a Chicago collector concentrating on Suicide; a Bostonian, on Castles and Chivalry; a Knoxville lady, on Gipsies; a Philadelphian, on Falconry; a Clevelander, on Cats (animal!); an Athol (Massachusetts) specialist on Witchcraft and Demonology; a Detroiter, on Criminology; a Buffalo enthusiast of Yacht Voyages; and a Lawrence (Massachusetts) expert on Old Penny "Bloods". These are but passing examples of the diversity of collecting by-paths.

Are there collectors of curious sermons? Has the Pulpit afforded scope for collecting? These are the questions which prompted this End-Paper when I came across a sixteen-pager with the extraordinary title: *The Bridal Bush: or a Sermon Preached to a New-Married Couple at Æasen in Norfolk*. By H. C. (London. Printed and Sold by H. Hills, in Black-fryars near the Water-side: 1709). We all know that for ninety-nine bookmen out of a hundred Religion, as a collecting subject, is the Untouchable; and Sermons, except for those of men like John Donne and Sir Walter Scott, are the Damned. Most people would not expect Curiosa from the pulpit: yet, remembering

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some of our old hard-riding, hard-drinking squire-parsons and your pioneer-preachers in the primitive chapels of early America, the dearly-beloved brethren, our forefathers, must have listened to some queer discourses in their time.

Anyhow, this *Sermon . . . to a New-Married Couple* urged a little research into Sermon literature, which revealed some curious titles. As early as 1588 Theodore Beza's light was not hidden under the title of *Two Very Learned Sermons*. Fourteen years later brought the publication of the Puritan William Burton's ten discourses on the *Anatomy of Belial*. The year 1623 saw the printing of Daniel Donne's *Subpoena to the Star Chamber of Heaven*; and then there is a long interval until the appearance of John Durrant's *A Cluster of Grapes taken out of the Basket of the Woman of Canaan* (1660). At the beginning of the next century, the Reverend Thomas Shepherd, A.M., specialized in Angels, issuing several sermons on them; and then, by way of contrast, published another on *The Power of Devils in bodily distempers* (1702). Wedding Sermons are a feature of pulpit Curiosa; and, in chronological order, there now followed a series of them, including the *Marriages made in Heaven* (1712) of the persecuted Nonconformist, John Shuttlewood; and the anonymous *Seven Sermons entitled the Shameful Sin, or Cautions against Whoring and Directions about Marrying* (1743). In 1767 appeared Beilby Porteus's *Sermon Occasioned by an Earthquake*; and the next year produced the famous *Sermons to Asses* by the Reverend James Murray, who opposed the American War, of which he wrote a history. Apparently Murray's public brayed for more, because five years later he published *New Sermons to Asses*. The close of the century produced something new in the literature with the *Sermons preached before the University of Cambridge . . . in Doggerel Rhymes* (1796) written by Alexander Geddes; but it certainly would be a novelty from the hand of this Roman Catholic priest and biblical critic, who was suspended for attending a Presbyterian service and also for hunting; and whose career generally was a rampageous one.

As for sermons which are already included in the field of collected items by reason of their authors' literary importance, those of John Donne were first published (posthumously) in 1640 prefixed with a *Life* by Izaak Walton, who compared their author in the pulpit to "an angel leaning from a cloud". The case of Sir Walter Scott is very different; and bears witness to the generosity of his heart, rather than to his pulpit zeal or ability. But no collection of his works would be complete without the *Religious Discourses by a Layman* (1828). These were written for Huntley Gordon, his amanuensis, who had entered Holy Orders and obtained the prospect of a Living. He was one day (in 1824) found in tears over his unsuccessful attempts to write the two initial sermons necessary to secure the appointment. "My good young friend," said Scott, "leave this matter to me—do you work away at the Catalogue, and I'll write for you a couple of sermons that shall pass muster well enough at Aberdeen." He did so; but they were never delivered by Huntley Gordon, who rightly considered that he could not produce them as his own, and who decided to abandon the career because he was almost stone-deaf. Three years later, when Scott was ruined and working off his £130,000 of debts, Huntley Gordon applied to him for help to pay £180 he owed. Sir Walter replied that he had no money to spare then; but gave him the *Religious Discourses* to publish as a book. Colburn, the publisher, paid Gordon £250;

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and Scott, when he heard the good news, wrote in his Diary: "Well sold, I think . . . I would rather the thing had not gone there; and far rather that it had gone nowhere—yet hang it, if it makes the poor lad easy, what needs I fret about it. After all, there would be little grace in doing a kind thing, if you did not suffer pain or inconvenience upon the score".

And on this genuinely religious note of that noble man may fittingly end my Sermon on Sermons.

THIS BOOK BELONGED TO . . . ?

I have a little quarrel to pick with some of my good friends the second-hand booksellers. I have noticed in some catalogues the comment appended to a description of a book: "Unfortunately there is a name on the fly-leaf"—or title-page—as the case may be. More often the comment tersely runs: "Has name on fly-leaf" (or title-page). But there is in both the same deprecatory note—almost an apology for someone having previously owned the volume and left his mark on it. Now, is not this unfair to the book, and therefore to the bookseller? Is it not an additional attraction to the next buyer to know that some bookman has possessed the item who thought well enough of it to inscribe it with his name? A little while ago I bought from Francis Edwards a book which I knew well, forgetting that I already had a copy of it. Was I vexed when on reaching home the duplication was discovered? Not a bit of it. They were about equal for condition; but at the top of the fly-leaf of the newcomer was the statement that it had belonged to Robert Southey. In June, 1843, one James Stanger acquired the book; and he modestly inscribed his name below that of the Poet Laureate. Fifty years later William Turtell felt that it was a privilege to add that he also had had the pleasure of owning the book. And a century hence someone will be amazed to note from the next signature that in the year of Depression, 1931, I—Wilfred Partington—by the Grace of Heaven and the Mercy of the Tax-collectors could still afford a few shillings for a book. It may be objected that this is a case of a volume which originally belonged to a famous man and is now establishing a history of ownership; whereas the type of item described first has only a single name of a probably unknown person. Well, of course, we all know dear old Southey; and a book which came out of that fine working library at Greta Hall is at once stamped as desirable.

But suppose my duplicate had only borne the name of "James Stanger, June 1843". Who was James Stanger? I don't know. But that is no reason why I might not find out; or why some future owner may not know. James Stanger may prove to be a very interesting signature—that of a book-collector or of a yet unrecognized author or artist. On the other hand, he may remain, for all time, just James Stanger—"merely this, and nothing more". It is the same to me; and known or unknown, I would rather have a copy bearing James Stanger's signature, than without. It tells me something; and if I am in the mood and very fond of the book, it may tell me more. I suspect that the new bibliolatry springs from the insistence of contemporary "Firsts" being in "mint state": the catalogue "apologies" for inscriptions are certainly less frequent as the books concerned are older. The deprecation of inscribed names in books must now be causing a considerable decline in the practice of recording ownership and establishing pedigrees. And in the caprice of taste, it is probable that the

(*Continued on page ix, rear advertising section.*)

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THE NEW BOOKS

THEY THAT TAKE THE SWORD *by Esmé Wingfield-Stratford* (MORROW. $4.00)

IT IS difficult to deal seriously with a book which, like this, is well written and obviously well intentioned but also, for most practical purposes in the matter to which it relates, entirely futile. Mr. Wingfield-Stratford discourses about the place of war in civilization, attacks the belief that the cave man was naturally a fighter, discusses duelling and blood feuds, dwells upon the vast destructiveness of war, relegates military men in general to the lower stages of ability, and warns us that "the collapse of civilization is the doom that awaits us, unless we can use this last chance of purging the disease of war from our social system". When it comes to remedies or escapes, however, he has nothing to offer except an expression of confidence in the League of Nations, an appeal to "the spirit of coöperation and love", and a realization that "the Kingdom of God is within us".

Leaving at one side the vexed question whether the teachings of Jesus regarding the kingdom of God are fairly to be interpreted as including a condemnation of war, it will probably occur to most readers that no revolutionary change in the temper of humanity is likely to be achieved except over a very long time, and that if we must wait for the world to enthrone a kingdom of God before war can become unthinkable, we must continue to live in imminent peril for many generations to come. What is most urgent at the moment is not a sweeping assurance that war as such will never again occur, but some reasonable hope of being able to avert the next war—the war which seems impending and for which all the leading nations that signed the Kellogg-Briand anti-war pact have never ceased to prepare. Only a faith that could move mountains can believe that an appeal to the Gospels will avail to check the increase of armaments or lessen reliance upon them.

Even the historical arguments which Mr. Wingfield-Stratford marshals fail to endow his preachment with practicality. The motives which formerly impelled peoples to war seem remote when present-day conditions are considered; and while Mr. Wingfield-Stratford has a good deal to say about the World War, he harks back to earlier times for most of his illustrations. To the greatest present incitement to war, the life and death struggle for raw materials and markets, he pays singularly little attention. The most that can be said for the book is that it shows, in a rather disorderly but high-minded fashion, an impressive list of excellent reasons why war should be avoided.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

MUSIC AT NIGHT *by Aldous Huxley* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

THOSE who have tended to associate Aldous Huxley himself with the flippant, bitter, restless creatures of his fiction have before them a revealing experience in listening with him to *Music at Night*—"a still June night, by preference, with the breathing of the invisible sea for background to the music, and the

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scent of lime trees drifting through the darkness like some exquisite soft harmony apprehended by another sense".

This book of essays might have been written to satisfy Edwin Muir, who years ago complained that the novel was not a fitting form of expression for the "intellectual fantasies" of Aldous Huxley, whose ingenuous and ironical running arguments with himself lost much by being put into the mouths of shoddy, tiresome people, vastly less interesting than their creator. *Music at Night* may convert many readers to Mr. Muir's view.

For in these essays the contrast between Aldous Huxley and his fictional characters is often strikingly shown. His characters are notable for having no reticence at all; but the tempter from "the great American journal" cannot, even with his fabulous check, induce the reticent Mr. Huxley to become "a Benefactor of Humanity" by telling "Why Women Are No Mystery To Me". Indeed, to Mr. Huxley a writer who can so market the most intimate details of his life is "a monster of spiritual impudicity". Aldous Huxley has long been peculiarly cherished by the unconventional; *Music at Night* may endear him equally to the traditionalists. For seldom in such narrow compass have so many present-day fallacies been trenchantly shown up, and so many "great obvious truths" treated with freshness and insight.

But in this predominantly mellow volume there are a few bits suggestive of juvenilia. Railings addressed "To a Puritan" seem scarcely more fresh and original today than a screed against Infant Damnation. It is surprising that the author who in his subtler essays has deftly pilloried most of the current snobberies should himself be guilty of the "forbidden-word-snobbery" in its most intolerant form. One scarcely understands how a writer who has noted so critically the effects of compulsory education, who realizes that "the pleasures of ignorance are as great, in their way, as the pleasures of knowledge", can passionately condemn to the rack those whose opinions about words differ from his own.

Certainly in this volume what has been called Aldous Huxley's "Gothic mind" is not at its best when baiting the "smut-hounds" or belabouring poor Mrs. Grundy ("old cat that she is"), who is already down. Mr. Huxley might advantageously have left all this to the writers, numerous and articulate enough, whose minds are mere modern tenements. He is more happy musing upon his moonlit garden, the desert and the Dolomites, and agreeing with Socrates that the moon is a god.

RUTH FRISBIE MOORE

THE MANUSCRIPT OF MILTON'S PARADISE LOST, BOOK I, *edited by Helen Darbishire* (OXFORD. $10.00)

SAMUEL SYMONS, who published *Paradise Lost* in 1667, assigned his right in the book, shortly after 1680, to Brabazon Aylmer, who ten years later sold it to a third printer, Jacob Tonson. The three names are savoury. In 1732, old Tonson was stirred to his loyal depths by the appearance of a "revised" version edited by one Bentley. This man was an opinionated and mischief-loving person who, claiming that the printers had obviously debauched the text of the poem, "corrected" it in the light of what he called "common sense" (that is, his own sweet will), after lamenting, perhaps with crocodile tears, the disappearance of the manuscript. Tonson, in the course of a long and indignant letter to a friend, who is desired to bring the matter to the attention of "Mr. Pope", exclaims: "I am indeed at present (it cannot last long)

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not a little concerned in this vultures falling upon a Poet y^{t} is y^{e} admiration of England & its greatest credit abroad". The reason "it cannot last long" is that Tonson triumphantly produces the manuscript of the first book of the poem, "which was preserved onely uppon account of the License written before it"—that is, the license for printing required by law, written on the inside of the first sheet. This license was secured for the dangerous Milton with some difficulty; but that is another story. The point of present interest is that old Tonson was able to show that the printers had been faithful enough to their copy, and that the "vulture" was following a false scent.

This manuscript, kept safely by five successive printers and by the descendants of the fifth, was offered for sale in London in 1904 with a reserve price of five thousand pounds. Not sold at the time, it was afterwards bought by Mr. Pierpont Morgan for his great library. And now (1931), in a book beautifully made by the Oxford University Press, with introduction and notes by Miss Darbishire, the manuscript is reproduced for the public in collotype—followed by a transcript in modern type and a reprint of the first edition, given alongside each other on opposite pages.

Unfortunately this book can inform us very little on the point of main interest, the process of Milton's composition. We do not know to what extent the blind poet revised his "unpremeditated verse" in his mind, before ever he uttered it to his associates. We know that he revised, very rigorously, his initial dictations. Richardson says: "I have been told that he would dictate many, perhaps 40 Lines as it were in a Breath, and then reduce them to half the Number". We should like to have before us the original forty. But doubtless it is fitting that our modern lust for origins and evolutions, in nature and in poetic style, should be checked by fate in the case of a poet who wished our minds to linger only on clear perfection, and who urged

> That not to know at large of things remote
> From use, obscure and suttle, but to know
> That which before us lies in daily life,
> Is the prime Wisdom; what is more is fume,
> Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,
> And renders us in things that most concerne
> Unpractis'd, unprepar'd, and still to seek.

Yes, but yet—I confess I should much like to know the initial form of this superb passage. However, it seems that Milton or somebody else destroyed all the preliminary drafts of *Paradise Lost*. A scholars' paradise—or limbo, as Milton would say—has thus gone lost. Miss Darbishire believes that the first and patchwork draft of Book One, made up of successive parcels written in clumsy haste by many hands at the poet's dictation, was corrected and then copied by a single scribe, whose work was probably recorrected in a recopy, from which was made the fair copy that constitutes our manuscript. You will see, if you managed to reach the end of the preceding sentence safely, that the final copy would naturally have a certain finality. Nevertheless it contains a number of corrections; and the editor, with her acute knowledge of inks and scripts, has been able to trace the hands of five different correctors. Probably enough, when the fair copy was read to Milton by one friend or another, he asked them to make certain changes. Two of these are important improvements. (1) Line 156 was at first: "Whereto with speedy words the Fiend reply'd". This must have struck Milton, when it was read aloud to him in its whole context, as too speedy altogether, too thin; and the title assigned to Satan may well have seemed too degrading at this early stage of

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the story. Hence "the Fiend" is altered, in a different script, to "th' Arch-fiend", our present reading. (2) Line 709 was originally: "To many a hundred pipes the sound-bord breaths". First, the word "hundred" is changed to "hunderd", in accordance with Milton's usual and euphonious spelling of this word. Then, "hunderd" is struck out and "row of pipes" written above. This was indeed a fine tonal inspiration. It subtly prepares, I think, for "the dulcet symphonies" of the verses that follow in the text.

Miss Darbishire has many illuminating remarks on Milton's peculiar spellings and pointings as determined by his poetic purposes. Above all, her study of the manuscript has led her to suggest a number of changes in the accepted text of Book One. Many of these are quite speculative. But one of them seems absolutely certain, and two seem very probable. (1) In line 756, "capital" should be "capitol". The poet in building his Pandaemonium had in mind the Roman temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. In the MS the original word is clearly "capitoll"; but someone not so classical as Milton has altered the "o" to "a" with a thick downward stroke of the pen. (This detail is not noticed by the Columbia editors of Milton). (2) At line 314 the MS has:

> He calld so loud, that all the hollow deeps
> Of Hell resounded . . .

Miss Darbishire remarks: "The reverberating echo of Satan's voice, resounding from deep to deep of Hell, is perhaps what Milton imagined". These "deeps" prepare for Satan's later line: "And in the lowest deep a lower deep" . . . (3) At line 530 the MS, and also the first edition, read "Their fainted courage". The second edition reads "fainting"—though the fallen angels at this point are reviving, under the influence of Satan, from the blank or "fainted" mood, the "abject and lost" condition, in which they had lain "intrans't" on the hellish lake. Of course, it can be claimed that Milton himself may have authorized these deviations from the MS. But they seem to me alterations for the worse, made by un-Miltonic intelligences in the interest of supposed verbal logic.

G. R. ELLIOTT

THE SATIN SLIPPER: OR THE WORST IS NOT THE SUREST *by Paul Claudel* (YALE. $5.00)

THERE is no doubt that M. Claudel in *The Satin Slipper* has written a remarkable drama; it is his own richest achievement and even, perhaps, a masterpiece. In form, in spirit, in sympathy, in technique, it is a combination of Elizabethan and heroic drama. M. Claudel has so soaked himself in the influence of the Elizabethans that he has caught their very accent and turn of idea. The rôle fits him naturally, too: this is no imitation of the Elizabethans—it is an extension of their *corpus*. Their loose, fantastic, prodigal kind of writing at last finds a home amongst the French, to whom it was so long repugnant.

Even M. Claudel's heroine is an Elizabethan. Prouheze is mannish and self-sufficient; she mixes in high politics, and her concern is with action, not intrigue; she comes of the line of Britomart, of Portia and of the Duchess of Malfi. In Elizabethan counterpoise, there is the more tender Dona Musica, not masculine but still boyish; she has come direct from Arden, and, indeed, in the course of the play we meet her there. Her forest is on the shores of Sicily but it is none the less recognizable.

The play is complex, but the main theme is fairly simple. It is the history of Prouheze

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and Rodrigo, their individual souls and their part in building up the hegemony of Spain and the Catholic Church. They have fallen catastrophically in love with each other, but their obligations and their own temperaments keep their paths from crossing. Under the stimulus of his grandiose egoism and bitter with frustration, Rodrigo governs and exploits the new world of America; he succeeds in his design of making the isthmus passable to ships and opens a way to the Japans. Prouheze meanwhile stands guard over Africa. In flagration of her own feelings she marries the treacherous and cynical Camillo, commandant of Mogador, and keeps him harmless to Spain. Thus between them they straddle the world, and all its destinies seem bound up in their own fates.

A letter from Prouheze, an old appeal to Rodrigo to come and see her, is delivered after many years. Rodrigo returns, but by now Prouheze has experienced a spiritual awakening; earthly love has given way to the love of heaven and the Church. She directs Rodrigo to the same path and they part. The return is the ruin of Rodrigo's fortunes. The Spanish Court has had enough of so commanding a figure; he is mocked and cast out. We leave him at the lowest ebb of earthly disgrace, given away with a bargain lot of scrap iron and rubbish to the nuns of Saint Teresa—and, presumably, at the beginning of his spiritual progress.

It is not chiefly the main theme that makes the play remarkable, though it is through the theme that we seem to be involved in such ghostly and colossal issues. The whole play, however, is full of brilliant incidental scenes, pictures of court life and common life in the days before the Armada, pieces of outrageous fantasy and fooling, varied and sure characterization. Much of its power in translation is due to the success of Fr. John O'Connor in preserving the poetic height of the most important scenes. He has accomplished a difficult task with triumph, and it is only in the passages of low life and comedy that his version reads stiffly.

There are grave faults in the play; and one of the gravest springs from the ambitious scale on which M. Claudel has conceived the drama. From time to time his courage sinks and he grows self-conscious. In his prefatory poem he states that he has written for his own taste and judgment. In several scenes he commits the unforgivable dramatic sin, the awful whimsy, of making the characters speak about the author and reveal themselves as puppets. This is a pity, for, plainly enough, the play was conceived with feeling and sincerity. To some readers, or auditors, another difficulty will seem even more devastating. We can sympathize thoroughly with the main characters only if we see them as tragic and misguided figures, and their sacrifice as revealing the flaw of great natures who strive to be inhuman. There can be little doubt, however, that to M. Claudel their lack of humanity is a virtue and his play puts forward the moral that Catholicism should conquer though human nature perish. Fortunately it is just possible to take this conception as historical atmosphere; and in any case we shall be left with a work of full and varied talent.

ALAN PORTER

LINCOLN AND HIS CABINET *by Clarence Edward Macartney* (SCRIBNER'S. $3.50)

THE shrewd politician who became the President of the United States in 1861, with secession boiling beneath, had the wisdom to brace himself by putting important men in his cabinet, without regard to their possible rivalry. In so doing he set up a stand-

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ard for himself, yet easily overmastered the best of them. His course indicated either little or great confidence in himself. The former was the popular interpretation; the latter became evident soon enough and grew through the troubled years. Dr. Macartney gives a specific account of Simon Cameron, Caleb B. Smith, Edward Bates, William H. Seward, Gideon Welles, Salmon P. Chase, Montgomery Blair and Edwin M. Stanton. The Republican Party was too new to have any pedigreed candidates for the high offices, and so it was that Seward, Smith and Bates were former Whigs, while Chase, Blair, Welles, Cameron, and Stanton, who succeeded Cameron, had been Democrats; Stanton, indeed, had not changed his coat. All were men of might either in politics or affairs. The author credits Seward, Chase, Bates and Blair to Lincoln's own choice, as was Stanton; the others to party exigencies. Seward and Welles were the only survivors of the original appointees. Lincoln had matters in his own hands when he came to fill their shoes. Cameron was the first to go. Save for Stanton, the new men were no improvement upon their predecessors. Seward is called "Lincoln's prime minister". It is true he joined the cabinet with that notion in his head, but speedily found there was "no such animal". Bates had been a candidate against Lincoln for the nomination at Chicago and credit is given Horace Greeley for his gaining a cabinet place. Indeed, Greeley went to the convention as a substitute delegate from Oregon and took on the wishes of his fellow members, who were for Bates. He did not influence Bates's getting into the sacred circle, Chase figures as "the man who wanted Lincoln's place"—but was cleverly side-tracked by the latter into the chief-justiceship. He is described as a man who would never do business with a woman, but his masterful daughter Kate might, in a way, have been responsible for the accentuation of this trait. Blair was forced out of the cabinet to appease John C. Frémont. In return Frémont withdrew. Had he remained in the field the chances are that Lincoln would have been beaten by Major-General George B. McClellan, his Democratic opponent. Blair deserved a better fate, but bigger things than his head were in the balance. Welles stands out strongly in the story as the capable administrator of the navy, who picked good men for his commanders and made no mistakes. Of them all Stanton aroused the greatest antagonism and did the most work. Much interesting information has been compressed into this volume. The men stand out clearly, each in his proper place and, on the whole, pretty well measured.

DON C. SEITZ

TWELVE SECRETS OF THE CAUCASUS *by Essad-Bey* (VIKING. $3.00)

ESSAD-BEY is a Caucasian who comes from Baku on the Caspian Sea. His book contains information and anecdotes, in journalistic arrangement, about that corner of the world which is neither Europe nor Asia and which is known for its mountains, its many tribes, its many languages, its antiquity, its danger, and its odd sense of humour. Whoever has desired to know the meaning of such Caucasian terms as *Abrek, Chechen,* or *aul* will find them explained here. He will also find stories of tribes descended from the Romans, of Christians who have never heard of Christ; humorous stories of brigands and Dumas; sensational stories of Tolstoy and Stalin. The book teems with "secrets"—there must be nearer a gross than a dozen of them. They are seldom authenticated, it is true, but they can usually be depended upon to be

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either startling or amusing. And yet for all Essad-Bey knows of the Caucasus, one is more impressed by what he knows of the average occidental reader. Here in this daggered Mohammedan is an astonishing talent for providing our public with what it wants. Few Hearst writers can equal him for slickness. Every course in journalism should devote a lesson to his consummate treatment of suggestive themes. Ironically, the conclusion that he draws is that the Caucasus can never be changed, always standing aloof from the influence of western civilization. He himself would seem to be an example of the effect upon a Caucasian of one aspect of occidental culture.

GERALD SYKES

THE WANDERER OF LIVERPOOL *by John Masefield* (MACMILLAN. $3.50)

THIS is the biography of a four-masted barque launched at Liverpool in 1891 and sunk by collision in the Elbe in 1907. It contains much clear expository and narrative prose, admirably accurate and straight-grained, of the sort of which Mr. Masefield long ago showed himself a master. Also it contains a good deal of dull and cacophonous doggerel for which it is hard to discover either a reason or an excuse, and some poetry. Whether the book was written for makers of ship-models or for lovers of literature or—what is more likely—as a pious and loving record of a kind of beauty that will not be seen again, one cannot decide. As diverse in theme and purposes as in style, it is a book from which several classes of readers will get their several kinds of pleasure, but from which everyone will get perplexity. Ship-modellers will welcome the various plans of *The Wanderer's* construction and some readers will take some sort of interest in the detailed accounts of her ten voyages—with the names of her crews, photographs of her officers, and exact tabulations of the dates on which she entered and left this port and that. It is not easy, however, to imagine anyone except the few men who sailed on her—to whom the book is dedicated—who will be particularly interested in the photograph of "Puss", the quite ordinary-looking ship's cat. For the general reader the detail is often wearisome in the extreme and all but meaningless. For example: "She was very strongly built, with heavy web frames running from her 'tween-decks to her side keelsons . . . wall-sided, rather hard in the bilge and with a flat floor, though she grew somewhat sweeter aft. . . . She was clencher-built, with steel frames, beams and shell-plating. The butts of her side-plating were fitted on the outside of her hull, instead of inside as was then usual. She had iron floors, and an iron deck-plating, with yellow pine deck plank above it. She had heavy teak skirtings along her waterways and line of hatches. She had a fully-laid wooden 'tween-decks".

This passage, which is not at all unrepresentative, will show that Mr. Masefield is not primarily concerned in this book with literary interest or with the literary graces. He has evidently started out to discover everything discoverable about a ship whose beauty delighted him in his youth, and he is so completely absorbed in his topic as to fancy that others will be so too, without any effort on his part to win them over. Such an attitude, no matter what the topic concerned, has of course both the charm and the defects of pedantry.

The ordinary pedant, however, can usually be trusted not to break out, or break down, into verse, suddenly and without warning in the midst of his lucubrations. This is just what Mr. Masefield does again and again, to

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the bewilderment, one must imagine, of his ship-modellers and retired sailors quite as much as to the distress of those who remember him as a poet. Verse, one calls it for variety, the word "doggerel" having already been used. This is the sort of thing:

Her builder and owner drank tea with her captain below.
He said "Are you bent upon sailing at morning's full flood?"
And Currie, the captain, said "Surely. Determined to sail."
Her owner replied: "It is stormy, and something within
Warns me that worse is approaching; much worse, I imagine.
Stay until Monday, and give the gale time to blow over.

There is a good deal of this sort of thing, and worse—mingled, to be sure, with lines here and there that are very much better. Only one extended passage, however, is worthy, from the literary point of view, to appear with Mr. Masefield's name. *A Masque of Liverpool* is in several respects a fine poem.

ODELL SHEPARD

ROBERT BURTON'S "PHILOSOPHASTER" *edited and translated by Paul Jordan-Smith* (STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. $5.00)

IN 1606, Burton, then twenty-nine, wrote *Philosophaster*—a welcome commentary on that portion of the *Anatomy* which explains why scholars are melancholy. We are glad to realize that a few years before Burton catalogued the miseries of a scholastic career, he must have enjoyed reworking this cheerful Latin play, for in 1615 he revised it. It was produced by the students of his own college in 1617 and first published in 1862 from Burton's own manuscript. From this rare and hitherto unique edition the present Latin text has been reprinted and translated. This volume contains all of Burton's minor writings: a Latin preface to a Latin-English dictionary, Latin poems for Oxford anthologies, and his will.

Those Burtonians who are fascinated by the mysterious ability of this humble bookworm to understand imaginatively the most diverse confusions of the soul will find here only a little of that gentle wisdom. A crew of philosophasters—a Jesuit, an alchemist, a benefice-hunting theologian, a pedantic grammarian—get places in a new university, cozen silly townspeople, and corrupt their pupils. Two wandering scholars expose these tricksters and persuade the duke to support the reformed university. The sketches of college life are picturesque: the townsmen are a servile, greedy lot, deservedly swindled, pummelled, plundered, and cuckolded by the gownsmen; the eternal freshman gets mixed up with a courtesan, who—as in Roman comedy—proves to be the long-lost daughter of a wealthy squire. The songs are rollicking, especially in the rhymed Latin.

Burton's standing grievances are simplified: the routed schoolmasters are ignorant, deceitful, and avaricious. The duke is a good patron, a rarity, according to the *Anatomy*. The true scholars are unworldly; they love learning fervently, for its own sweet sake. Thus good and bad are clearly contrasted; subtlety would have been out of place in a play to be acted by undergraduates. Sometimes the wickedness becomes dull, for it is not easy to make a parody of pedantry funny. Academic righteousness, however, is unexpectedly charming: the final chorus has all the absurd undergraduate glamour of one's own *Alma Mater*:

Cantate serenissimae
Triumphum philosophiae.

PAUL HAINES

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THE PERSECUTION OF MARY STEWART *by Sir Edward Parry* (SCRIBNER'S. $5.00)

PERHAPS the supreme tragedy of Mary Queen of Scots lies in the fact that her persecution did not end when she laid her head upon the block. That persecution has continued for more than three centuries. Indeed despite the fact that religious hatreds have paled through these centuries there are today millions who still believe that Mary murdered her husband because of her love for Bothwell, and was all in all the evil genius of her country. John Knox is still a name to conjure with among evangelical Protestants and Froude is an historian who had an extraordinary influence. That Knox had been proved one of the most unconscionable liars who ever blackened the memory of a woman, and that his action in the assassination of Cardinal Beaton made him a murderer as well did not seem to have had the slightest effect on Froude, who went on repeating the age-old calumnies and constantly referring to Mary's villainous half-brother as "the stainless Moray". And British anti-Catholic bias, worked upon by Froude's effective style, responded so effectively that even an anti-Puritan like Swinburne became infected with the belief that Mary was little more than a harlot. Of course the truth was far otherwise, and it is in the interest of this truth that Sir Edward Parry, one of England's most distinguished jurists, has set forth the evidence in the case.

Sir Edward Parry's book might well be entitled "The Case of Mary Stewart *vs.* Moray, Maitland, and Morton", the trio of villains which Sir Edward dubs "The Syndicate". And of course, there was always in the background the extraordinary figure of Cecil, Mary's implacable enemy—though, unlike the Syndicate, he was her enemy for patriotic and not personal reasons. It is true that Moray, Maitland, and Morton were Protestants, but unlike Knox in that their Protestantism was only a cloak for their ambitions. They wished to rule Scotland and were in England's pay. It was they who murdered Rizzio and Darnley, using Bothwell as their tool. And when at last Mary became the prisoner of Elizabeth they were speedily at each other's throats. Then for once the gods were just—these precious heroes all came to violent deaths. Beside these villains what a beautiful figure Mary becomes! For Mary Stewart summed up in her lovely form much that was best in the Renaissance. She was a Catholic, but she was without bigotry and wished to tolerate all religions—and for that she won the hatred of the fanatic Knox. She was a woman who wished to govern her country for the good of her countrymen—and for that she won the enmity of her own half-brother, of the bloody Morton, and the tricky Maitland. Worst of all she was heir to the throne of England: and because she was a Catholic, that was intolerable to Cecil.

Sir Edward Parry is not a Catholic, but he is a lover of the truth, and he shows most conclusively the perjuries which ended in Mary's imprisonment and death. And he shows also that Mary, though a Catholic, was far from popular with the more extreme members of her Church. Had she become Queen of England it is very doubtful whether Cecil's fears of a Protestant persecution would have been realized. Mary Stewart was a woman far in advance of her time. Thrown into an utterly impossible situation, into a court in which there was no one she could trust, harassed by the fanatical Knox, with a jealous Elizabeth and a hostile Cecil across the border, she is at once a pathetic and a singularly heroic figure. At last history is admitting her to her own.

GRENVILLE VERNON

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THE NEW NOVELS

Some books demand a second reading almost at once; *Friends and Relations* by Elizabeth Bowen does. (Dial Press. $2.00.) If one turns back from the end to go through it again not a moment will have been wasted and a humility at first devastating but eventually wholesome will be the result. Before many pages have been reread it becomes apparent that Miss Bowen has not been over-subtle; it is we who have been dull. If we had been willing at the outset to take every word she has put down at face value the whole story would have been there for us, unmistakable, honestly foreshadowed within the first chapter. In rather sullen self-defense we can only plead that for years we have been victimized by novelists even duller than we, so bewildered by crowds of details that mean nothing, clues trailing into thin air, circumstances and conversations spun out for no better reason than that the author felt desperately that *something* must be done to make us believe the tale could have been true, that when Miss Bowen offers us a novel we victimize her in turn, scampering over what we fear may be padding, wary of being deluded again by a false clue, only to find that she meant exactly what she was saying, in every well written sentence.

The story is made from the consequences of a light woman's taking a lover. You are not asked to believe that if Lady Elfrida had for once in her trivial life foregone the thing she wanted all the lives bound up with hers would have been perfect. The author only asks you to believe, offering almost irrefutable proof in every case, that several people could have been better and happier if the mistake had not been made. With a sure and delicate feeling for personal responsibility, Miss Bowen has completely skirted the temptation to make Elfrida the universal scapegoat for all the errors and unhappiness that her other characters are called on to endure. "To explain" does not equal "to absolve" anywhere in this author's sensitive vocabulary. Nor does she, to prove her case, bring lives and homes crashing down in ruins. Starting with normally courageous people she leaves them making a great deal out of marriages that should never have been undertaken, getting much from relations which must always be incomplete.

To tell even this much of the story is to do the book a grave disservice. No synopsis can give any idea of the poignance without bathos or the wit without cynicism of *Friends and Relations*. I think I laughed outright oftener in reading it than in reading any current "humorous" book. This wit is as fundamental and as moving as many of Miss Bowen's less celebrated but even more valuable qualities. It arises, as in actual living, not in spite of but because of the gravity of the issue, at the moment when the warding-off, the feint, the sidestep, is the only alternative to facing the intolerable truth.

Perhaps the most triumphant piece of artistry in the novel is the character of Theodora. Miss Bowen will not allow you to hate Elfrida, nor her pitiably charming, tiresomely

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hypersensitive son, nor even "Uncle Considine", the co-respondent in that old scandalous catastrophe; but in Theodora, caught almost fortuitously into the plot, she draws you such a figure of perverse, malignant, ugly and unflagging jealousy that to hate her comes to seem like an exercise of the higher faculties. And by thus letting Theodora down into the story like a string about which all darker emotions can crystallize, Miss Bowen is able to draw her out again at the end, leaving admiration and pity unclouded.

It may be that a better English novel is being written at this moment than *Friends and Relations*; in that case it is very likely that Miss Bowen is writing it.

The difficulty with reporting on Sigrid Undset's *The Wild Orchid* (Knopf. $2.50) is that it is so obviously the first half of a two-part novel that any decision on it will have to be tentative. It is full of excellences, but all the lives and situations in it are held suspended at the end.

Paul Selmer, its young hero, is the eldest son of a divorced couple. His mother was a free-thinker of the eighties, full of the intoxicating notion that "reason" and "science" will lead us ultimately to the truth. It is when Paul learns that the divorce was really "on principle" that his maturity begins. Reasonably enough he had believed that Julie's lack of animus against his father and his father's second wife sprang from her chivalry. When at last, battling earnestly to convince him, his mother succeeds in making him realize that she left her husband and took his children away from him not because she was too deeply wounded by infidelity to continue to live with him, but because he was a slow-thinking, conservative bourgeois, the entire foundation on which Paul had started to build his life must be relaid.

It is almost unbelievable to him that for the reasons she has given him his mother was willing to break up a home, make a manless refuge for her children, rob his father of his sons and daughter, and throw the elder Selmer family into confusion. (As soon as his father remarried a kindly, florid, unexacting woman, Selmer's family assumed, exactly as young Paul had assumed, that only Julie's chivalry had kept her from charging him with infidelity, and her short martyrdom was over.) Neither is Paul able to convince his mother that he has any cause for his distress and dismay. Poor Julie is perfectly drawn—her emotional thinking which she mistakes for reason, her passionate conviction that she is in the vanguard of truth, her free-thinking aphorisms which have grown so stale in twenty years of parroting that not even young Paul can help finding them funny, the little home she made, full of ingenuous artistic effects, truly comfortable and clean and pretty but, first and most important of all, as complete an antithesis to the heavy carpets and curtains and upholstered furniture of the bourgeoisie as she could make it. Julie is really alert, eager, affectionate, intelligent and pathetically silly, and her son comes to see her that way.

The rest of the book is about Paul's first abortive adventure into love, his wavering approach to Roman Catholicism, his eventual marriage to a shallow little thing, and the birth of his daughter. Without overemphasizing, Fru Undset shows that Paul has had all he can stand of strong-mindedness in women, and in his recoil he chooses first Lucy, below him in class, almost totally lacking in intellect, pretty, sensual and prudish, incapable of either fidelity or trust, and then Björg, childish, vain and opinionated, quite as tragic a choice as Lucy had been.

The story is told against the background

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of Norway in the years of its breaking away from Sweden, giving Julie a cruel opportunity to show her illogical emotion and to defend it passionately as consistent and reasonable, and giving the lovers the threat of war to heighten their relation. The Catholics whom Paul meets in his pilgrimage toward maturity are brought in casually, almost accidentally, yet on the whole they seem the most important factors in his growth. They are almost too universally serene and stable, yet each is drawn as recognizably individual.

If this novel is somewhat disappointing to those who admired Sigrid Undset's great books of mediæval Norway, it may be because she has conceded too much to our age. *Kristin Lavransdatter* and *The Master of Hestviken* are epic dramas of conscience. But sin, repentance and redemption are hard words for the twentieth-century tongue; we use them awkwardly or without conviction when speaking about our contemporaries. Fru Undset knows this, and has either hesitated to confront us with them or has herself felt that they were out of key. As a consequence *The Wild Orchid* has not the intensity of her mediæval sagas; but it is possible that its sequel, *The Burning Bush*, which must inevitably treat of Paul's conversion to Roman Catholicism, may bring the completed novel back into the true Undset line.

Not one of the people at Miss Kennedy's country week-end in *Return I Dare Not* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.50) came out of simple friendliness. Every one of them had some ax to grind. There was the boy playwright who had discovered that his natural amiability was such an asset in his already phenomenal career that he had to go and be charming to the right woman even when he was on the verge of a break-down from sleeplessness. There was the titled and aging beauty who could still recruit lovers because she was influential. There was a publisher and his young wife, the young wife bored with years of fidelity and child-raising and on the point of putting her nonsensical libertarian talk into action, with the boy playwright as the beneficiary. There was the literary man about town who played the bachelor by suppressing his shabby-genteel household completely, and had come to the house party because it was the right thing to do. There are half a dozen other slightly shop-worn and self-seeking adults, none of whom gets what he came for. And there are, since this is a book by Margaret Kennedy, two adolescent girls who are charming, delicious, straightforward, disciplined, severe, truthful, pure of motive and of heart.

It becomes increasingly clear that Miss Kennedy's message to us is that an adolescent shall lead us. These two girls have more than a touch of that obnoxious Wordsworthian infant who was being a seer blest at an age when he had no business to be anything but a nuisance. All the noble traits are saved up for them (and for a poet, dead before the story begins, who was starkly faithful to his vision). Hugo Pott, the boy playwright (who, since he is only in his twenties, still trails some tatters of glory), is allowed to see the light at the instigation of the elder adolescent and to go off in the opposite direction from the rest of the party at its breaking-up, with the prospect of poetry, obscurity and Marianne before him as a glittering reward. I feel very unregenerate about Hugo Pott. He had had a shoddy, dull childhood, and I couldn't help wishing that he hadn't seen that London drawing-rooms and country week-ends were just so much dust and ashes quite so soon. I should like to have had him fooled a little longer into thinking it was great fun to be a darling of the gods, but

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no doubt that is because I have lost the clear vision of nineteen, and in any case it isn't important. This is a book for diversion, and it diverts. Many a mother will enjoy Marianne's straightforward nobility and turn right around to tell her own youthful goddess not to make an intolerant nuisance of herself when she has no comprehension of the complicated problems of maturity. But I recommend hiding it from everyone under twenty, because although Miss Kennedy has had the grace to make her youngsters really uproariously and unintentionally funny now and again, she actually worships these charming geese.

Grace Zaring Stone's new book, *The Almond Tree* (Bobbs-Merrill. $2.50), has modern Washington for its setting. No one needs to be assured, since it is by the author of *The Heaven and Earth of Doña Elena* and *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*, that it is expertly written. But it is rather a shock to realize, considering *The Almond Tree* in retrospect, that this book is "prettily" written—with a light, disarming touch quite out of keeping with its theme, which is selfishness.

It opens with the reunion of the three middle-aged Gentry sisters, whose family had been transplanted to the Capitol from a simple and neighbourly community in the interests of the father's political career. One sister is unmarried—a handsome, domineering, sentimental woman who devotes her life to keeping the home as "Mamma" would have had it; the second is divorced, sterile and restless, a true prude in spite of the tricks of sophistication she has been able to pick up; the youngest a recently bereaved widow, who has returned with her sixteen-year-old daughter from Europe, still too dazed with grief to resent her sisters' affectionate but tactless efforts to arrange her life.

Within a short time Mrs. Stone has established the fact that the two older sisters are complete emotional cowards, willing to meet human claims only so long as they are kept childish and unexacting. For a while Leda, the widowed sister, is indecipherable. She is introduced while she is still in a trance of unhappiness, but since she was capable of an enduring marriage, and an "ideal" one, the reader feels that she at least may be free from the blight of pathological selfishness. In the end it is Leda who fails most catastrophically. It becomes plain that there had been something morbid about the love between her and her husband: Marise, their daughter, hardly existed for them at all. They were kind to her, they "loved" her, but all their real emotion was confined to each other. Leda, left alone with her daughter, seems always on the point of becoming aware of her as a person with a life of her own, with legitimate claims on her mother for guidance and encouragement. But years of irresponsibility have left Leda unfitted to feel more than a momentary tender compunction whenever she fails Marise—as she does again and again. At last, still beautiful, still "aphrodisian" (to use Mrs. Stone's word) at forty-four, still needing fuel for her vanity, she marries a young lieutenant, never realizing that Marise loves him and that he had been caught in a dilemma between mother and daughter which she could easily have resolved had she not been blind. On this note of grotesque and wanton selfishness the book closes.

Good as *The Almond Tree* is, it is unsatisfactory. Not only because a story which must be a tragedy under any interpretation is told in a tone of social comedy, but because Mrs. Stone never makes it plain what she intended her book to imply. All contentions to the contrary notwithstanding, the title is of very little help. In Mrs. Stone's two previous books

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the setting was important to the story. Are we meant to gather that we are children playing at government, and that our personal lives show the same childishness? Is the author saying that the Gentrys might have flourished normally in their middle-Western home, but that uprooted and set down in Washington they were doomed to sterility? Or, if Washington has no significance one way or the other, perhaps some theory of parent-fixation seemed to Mrs. Stone to be illustrated by her allegory, a theory which remains dark to the reader. *The Almond Tree* seems to me a good book which falls just short of being a good novel.

It is a little difficult to take Evelyn Scott's two-volume epic of sex in America after the Civil War quite so seriously as it was meant to be taken. If half that she says in *A Calendar of Sin* (Cape & Smith. $5.00) about our ancestors' ineptitude at love were true, this continent, in even a paltry sixty-three years, would be populated almost entirely by the offspring of hardier and less genteel races. In the words of one reviewer who accepts Miss Scott's thesis, "Murder, rape, self-mutilation, sadism and suicide were the necessary products of any society which systematically distorted its erotic energies . . ." And indeed, if murder, rape, self-mutilation, sadism and suicide had taken a toll throughout our society proportionate to their havoc in the five generations of Miss Scott's narrative, then doubtless an appalled remnant of the American settlers would badly need this thundering tract in behalf of taking love easy.

But most of us, I suspect, had immediate forebears who had enough commonsense and affection to live down whatever initial pruderies they may have had and emerge into happy marriage, and we are bound to read Miss Scott with a sceptical eye. The book has plenty of virtues; the two sets of characters, for all their likeness to refined branches of the Kallikaks and the Jukes, are most astonishingly alive, and Miss Scott re-creates the atmosphere of her changing periods more than satisfactorily. If there were one grain of humour anywhere in the *Calendar's* pages, or if the untenable thesis could occasionally be forgotten for a chapter, these two volumes might be recommended to adults who like "strong" reading.

Parkhurst Whitney, on the other hand, has written in *Time Exposure* (Farrar & Rinehart. $2.00) a story which might go far in counteracting the effects of *A Calendar of Sin* if it could have some circulation. Unfortunately it was turned out in a dust-jacket aimed at the shop-girl trade; it will be a great victory for merit if it manages to find its audience.

It is the story of a lower middle-class American marriage which began with an elopement in the year 1900. Fannie, in Miss Scott's hands, would have been headed for certain disaster, for she is a prude of the first water and came from a matriarchal home. Chester is the average sensual man of any period, who has very little trouble coming to terms with his instincts. The marriage was nearly wrecked on the reefs of Fannie's "niceness", but it won through. Fannie becomes neither insane nor melancholy, and Chester is left on the verge of making a fortune; and if the author meant Chester's natural nose for money to be an indication that he was starved and thwarted in his emotional life (according to the most popular current theory about money-making), he should have made the fact considerably plainer.

Mr. Whitney's memory for old slang, old customs, old enthusiasms is astonishing. *Time Exposure* is far too modest a title. This

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is no mere photograph of girls in pompadours and men in stiff high collars. There is hardly a dialogue in the book that does not proceed from bromide to bromide; forgotten clichés sound again; bright young men find a whole range of satisfactory expression between slang and platitude. But each of them uses the right slang just in the right place; their platitudes carry their real convictions. By his subtle use of unsubtle material Mr. Whitney has brought a gallery of American bourgeois portraits back to life, showing the originals as men and women who were inarticulate, ambitious, half-educated, loving, humorous, intolerant and loyal. I hope he will write more novels.

DOROTHEA BRANDE

IN MY END IS MY BEGINNING *by Maurice Baring* (KNOPF. $3.75)

MR. BARING'S is the third book on Mary Queen of Scots, to be published this year. It differs from the others in that it is in novel, or rather short story, form, and purports to be the life of Mary Stuart told in turn by each of her four Marys—Mary Fleming, Mary Beton, Mary Livingstone, and Mary Seton. The stories of Mary Fleming and Mary Seton take the Queen up to her flight after the Battle of Langside, while the other two end with her incarceration in Lochleven. There is as a postcript a supposed report by Jane Kennedy to Mary Seton in which the Queen's death and funeral is narrated. Mr. Baring's book gives no new material and is chiefly of interest because of its author's masterly evocation of the writing style of the period. It is in short neither a novel nor a real biography, but rather a *tour de force*. Yet it has its interest beyond this. The story of Mary is told from four different angles, and nearly everything in each of the stories is contained in the others, yet such is the fascination of the story itself that it amply bears its four-fold repetition. The picture which Mr. Baring gives of Mary is practically that given in Justice Parry's recent volume, though in Mary Beton's account there is a hint that perhaps the Queen returned d'Anville's love more completely than is believed by some of her partisans. Yet on the whole the Mary Stuart of the book is a woman whose charm and beauty were well matched by the freedom of her spirit, and the generosity of her nature. It is not an important book but it is a charming one.

GRENVILLE VERNON

MAID IN WAITING *by John Galsworthy* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.50)

THOUGH this is Mr. Galsworthy's first long fiction since *Swan Song*, it adds little to his great reputation. Perhaps the decline perceptible throughout the two trilogies may be attributed to this novelist's failure to solve the contemporaneous riddle as easily as the late Victorian and the pre-War. But in all fairness we must remember that Mr. Galsworthy at his second-best exceeds most writers at their best. After all, *The Man of Property* is hardly to be duplicated.

The story concerns English men and women of the usual Galsworthian grade. The Charwells resemble the Forsytes; Fleur and the Monts come in as secondary characters. The maid in waiting is Dinny Charwell, a thoroughly intelligent, witty and charming heroine, who interests herself in the predicaments of those she loves and who neglects her own lovers. Her brother Hubert has got in a mess over a Bolivian expedition; he is much more of a static character than his en-

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emy, the American Hallorsen, who incidentally falls in love with Dinny. Her other enthusiastic admirer is the brother of the spirited Jean Tasburgh, whose marriage to Hubert Dinny engineers as a relief for his vexing situation. The other trouble that needs Dinny's assistance is the insanity of Ferse, the husband of Diana, an excellent woman beloved of Dinny and Dinny's uncle Adrian. Adrian himself is made well worth knowing, for his combination of sense and sympathy is a rare one. The unfortunate Ferse is one of the most vivid people in the book; Galsworthy treats him as a human being and not as a subject for pathological guess-work. The gallery of characters connected by various ties is large but not confusing; such minor figures as Aunt Em and Uncle Hilary are real creations.

The style represents, as usual, a fine balance between the dignified and the colloquial, between the smooth and the precise. The novel has a forward motion that is more easily perceived than explained; interest is not awakened and sustained through a specious excitement but rather through a coordination of personality and event. It is hard to see here a major significance or fundamental theme (unless it be that of carrying on, of doing the job); *Maid in Waiting*, unlike some other novels by Galsworthy, does not obviously symbolize an epoch or interpret a point of view. It is nevertheless far superior to the vast majority of the current offerings. It is not a great book, but it is a good one.

RICHMOND P. BOND

THE MARVELLOUS BOY *by Ernst Penzoldt* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.50.)

THE memory of Thomas Chatterton is kept alive today by a few poems of great beauty and vigour and by the legend surrounding his name. No other English poet comes nearer the ideal created by our imaginations of the tragic life to which fate condemns sensitive youth seeking beauty in an ugly world. Chatterton especially makes demands upon the imagination because the facts of his life fail completely in explaining how he came to be a poet. His father, a schoolmaster in Bristol, a respectable, even an unusual, man, died a few months before the poet's birth. His mother kept a sewing school. Thomas entered Colston's Hospital, a training school for apprentices where only practical subjects were taught, yet by the time he was twelve years old he was writing verses in imitation of fashionable poets and printing them in Bristol newspapers. When he was fifteen years old, he was apprenticed to an attorney, who, although interested in literature, was unaware that the sullen boy copying precedents in his office might be a poet. Chatterton had few duties, but he was prodigiously busy writing satirical verses, inventing fantastic pedigrees for Bristol merchants, perhaps playing at being a rakehell, and, most important for his fame, writing the Rowley poems. Following the example set by Macpherson in his *Ossian* and by Walpole in his *Castle of Otranto*, he tried to pass off his poems as the work of a fifteen-century monk, Thomas Rowley, but Horace Walpole immediately detected Chatterton's fraud. Perceiving after this that there was no chance of advancement for him in Bristol, Chatterton contrived to be released, and went to London, from where he wrote his mother: "No author can be poor who understands the arts of booksellers. . . . This knowledge I have pretty well dipped into". His confident manner seemed justified, for he was contributing to magazines and earning a little money, when in August of the same year, shortly before his eighteenth birthday, he took poison and died.

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For a few years antiquaries disputed the authenticity of the Rowley poems, forgetting the character of the author. Then the romantic poets took upon themselves the cherishing of the memory of Thomas Chatterton. Coleridge at sixteen wrote his *Monody*, lamenting that Chatterton was driven to death by "Neglect and grinning scorn and Want". Wordsworth it was who called him "the marvellous boy", and Shelley mentioned him in *Adonais* among the "inheritors of unfulfilled renown". Keats dedicated *Endymion* to his memory, "the most English of poets except Shakespeare". His fame spread to France, and Alfred de Vigny wrote a play about him. In Chatterton's life and death, these poets read the inevitable fate of pride and genius.

Ernst Penzoldt in his novel *The Marvellous Boy* makes no pretensions to accuracy or truth, but is writing about the romantic nature in general. That there may be no doubt about the meaning of his story, he spares no pains in making Chatterton's environment as painful as his invention permits. The people who surround Chatterton are hardly human; if they smile, they smile repulsively. Chatterton's father is unnecessarily transformed into a brute who dies in a drunken fury. The boy's mother and sister are sufficiently misunderstanding, and his only companion is girlish and feebleminded. His master is evil and hideous, and Horace Walpole a vain and silly coxcomb. When driven by poverty and pride to take his own life, his last act in this world is to delight in the seductive beauty of his own face which he studies in a mirror as the poison takes effect. The whole book is unreal and nightmarish, certainly successful in creating a world which a sensitive boy would be glad to escape by death. Whether the author succeeds in creating in his central character the marvellous boy who not only committed suicide but also wrote *An Excelente Balade of Charitie* is another question.

THEODORE BAIRD

FOUR FRIGHTENED PEOPLE *by* E. *Arnot Robertson* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

E. ARNOT ROBERTSON has reversed the formula of her preceding novel, *Three Came Unarmed*. In that penetrating and diverting attack upon the mob spirit of civilization, she brought three, hard, unsentimental young English savages, raised in the Borneo jungle, into contact with London society, where they each encountered a more or less tragic fate. In *Four Frightened People*, Miss Robertson has brought four softly-reared English people into intimate and unexpected contact with the Malaysian jungles.

Three of these unwilling adventurers, refugees from a plague-stricken ship, are conscientiously unsentimental Londoners of the sort which derives most of its attitudes from Aldous Huxley. Judy Corder is a doctor, her cousin Stewart a journalist, and Arnold Ainger is a civil servant with a taste for philology. The fourth, Mrs. Mardick, is a well-intentioned woman, brimming with platitudes, whose inclusion in the party was accidental and undesired. Tramping through the jungles, lost, foot-sore, tormented by insects and heat and hunger, aware of the fact that they may never live to return to civilization, these people cling determinedly to their intellectual detachment. They discuss—very divertingly, it may be said—such irrelevant matters as Marcel Proust and musical comedy; they quote poetry; they unite in detesting Mrs. Mardick; and they maintain a studious unawareness of their physical proximity.

One by one, however, we see their intellectual prejudices stripped off by savage life, until there remains only the core of their raw egotism and their fundamental physical de-

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mands. They ruthlessly contrive the desertion of Mrs. Mardick. In the comparative security of their capture by a jungle tribe, their sexual necessities, which have been suppressed by activity and danger, emerge, and the two men are thrown into bitter conflict. Once the peril is past, however, and they are all safely on shipboard bound for England, they slide harmlessly back into their decent civilized disillusionment.

The story of *Four Frightened People* is an excellent one, until Miss Robertson betrays us by adding the conventional happy ending. But the novel as a whole lacks the intense singleness of purpose which made the satire of *Three Came Unarmed* memorable.

MARGARET WALLACE

GREEN MEMORY *by M. Barnard Eldershaw* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.00)

A YEAR or more ago there appeared a book called *A House Is Built*, by an unknown Australian name, M. Barnard Eldershaw. No secret was made of the fact that M. Barnard Eldershaw was not one person, but two, and that the work was a collaboration. It was highly praised, and justly. The first book of these young women was a neat and unified piece of work, well hiding whatever mechanics were made necessary by the collaboration. The second book from their pens is no disappointment. Again the reader has no way of discovering what was contributed by one writer, what by the other. A perfectly welded story flows along in an even pace to its happy conclusions, with characters that stand out in full individuality. So well constructed is the action that it seems to proceed from the people concerned, rather than from any manipulation of the plot by the writers.

Lucy Haven, a beautiful and proud girl who might have been in one of Thomas Hardy's novels, is the motivating force in the lives of those whose household she rules, her mother, her small sister, and two younger brothers. When the father commits suicide rather than face disgrace, leaving the family penniless, Lucy gives up a brilliant marriage to take care of them. Charlotte takes the family's loss of fortune as the opportunity she did not have before of marrying the man of her choice, a man of whom her father would not have approved in the Sidney of Victorian days, when caste was of great social significance. It is Lucy who makes the boys keep on with their school instead of going to work; Lucy who makes her mother practise the rigid and petty economies that are so foreign to her former way of living; Lucy whose austerity drives her little sister, Mina, to Charlotte for comfort and love. Lucy is not only unappreciated, but is disliked and even hated by those whom she serves, yet she must do her duty as she sees it and hold her little family together. From a hearty dislike of Lucy, the reader grows to admire her more and more, and even, at the end, to love her for what she has tried to do, rather than to despise her for the way she did it. From a love of Charlotte, the softer, younger sister, the reader comes to look upon her as less admirable, and less to be loved.

The Misses Barnard and Eldershaw have utilized a common experience in human life: that the affectionate and seemingly attentive ones often get all the love, when the more righteous and zealous are disliked. It was the brother of the prodigal son who did the right thing, but the younger son got all the glory. About this theme they have woven their story—a story that is like a tapestry in soft colours, with more life in its foreground and background than have two thirds of the novels that deal with living in its more violent

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aspects. The reader who enjoys serious and sympathetic treatment of ordinary things made dramatic will look forward with impatience to the third product of the gifted pair.

MYRA M. WATERMAN

THE JEWEL *by Claire Goll* (KNOPF. $2.00)

"WERE Zola living today", wrote Victor Margueritte, "he would certainly recognize in Claire Goll a brilliant disciple". No criticism could better epitomize Miss Goll's talents and shortcomings, for she writes precisely as if she had been a member of the supposedly long-dead Naturalistic school of Zola and the Goncourts, and her work shows no improvement over her fifty-year-old models. The same preoccupation with sordid details for their own sake, the same consciously objective viewpoint, the same humanitarian interest in the oppressed, misunderstood classes of urban wage-earners, the same note of bitterness, and beneath it all the same social doctrine makes of *The Jewel* a pure novel of naturalism. The story, like George Moore's *Esther Waters* and so many novels of the period when George Moore was an expatriate in Paris, recounts the life of a servant-girl, come from the provinces to earn her living in the city and to protect her innocence against all the hazards of cosmopolitan life. Marie is a "jewel" of a girl until, seduced and abandoned by a negro chauffeur, she falls into the arms of the Jewish pearl merchant who employs her (hence the intentional pun in the title, which was originally *Une Perle*). The birth and sudden death of a child add to her shame and suffering and lead inevitably to the final cold plunge into the Seine. The plot is already too familiar and the details, likewise, are old, since the life of the Parisian maid-of-all-work has changed but little if at all in the past half-century. Whereas the author's starkly realistic descriptions of revolting aspects of life too often strive to shock the reader into a sympathetic attitude toward the trials of Marie, many of the episodes in the brothel, the domestic-help employment agency, the charity bureau for illegitimate children, the cemetery crematory, and the public wash-house succeed in presenting a vividly memorable picture of a Paris that will never get into the guide-books. This, however, is a very doubtful virtue in a novel.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

LESBY *by Elizabeth Willis* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.00)

AN Amazon of the farmlands, Lesby is a woman whom all the farmers want to marry. She is good looking and a tremendously hard worker, and hence far more desirable than her little sister Anne. Anne is the sensitive one of the family, loving the farm not for its head of cattle but for its wild-flowers and hidden places of beauty. When Stephen MacLaren buys half interest in the farm and comes to live with the Croys, he falls in love with Lesby, while Anne falls in love with him. This, in brief, is the plot of *Lesby*, one of the entries in the $5,000 prize contest for stories recently conducted by *Scribner's*. The characters are simple in their needs, desires and passions; and the reader at all times appreciates the fact that he is face to face with something vital and primitive.

At first the sympathy is with Anne, pushed into the background by her sister. It is Lesby who has the admirers; Lesby whom their father cherishes. Anne, delicate and imaginative, is out of place in the coarse, everyday life of the farm to which Lesby takes so naturally. When Stephen comes, sympathy is again with Anne, that she must love this

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man who has eyes only for her sister. But when Stephen discovers that it is really Anne whom he loves and wants, the sympathy is divided between Anne and Lesby, for the older sister hides her hurt and proceeds about her life as though she were unaware of the struggle that is taking place in the man so important to both of them.

Only Stephen seems a little less vivid in this triangle. His dilemma is portrayed well, but the interest is so focused on the two girls that his character is rather lost sight of. The climax of the story comes when Anne is about to run away with Stephen, and Lesby sends her to a neighbouring farm on an errand. Anne is reluctant to go, for in this neighbour's house has been enacted the same sort of tragedy that is taking place in their own—a sister has run off with her brother-in-law. To sensitive Anne, the fact that she must be confronted with a drama in another's life which runs so parallel to her own is overwhelming, and the dénouement is in keeping with the fraught nerves and distraught minds of all of the characters. *Lesby* is hardly in a class with *Ethan Frome*, as the jacket suggests; the tragedy is not so stark nor so pointed as was Mrs. Wharton's. But it is nevertheless a nicely done bit of writing and one that must have made the judges of the *Scribner's* contest optimistic concerning contestants.

MYRA M. WATERMAN

GOD IN THE STRAW PEN *by John Fort* (DODD, MEAD. $2.00)

It is the "poor whites" of the Mississippi farmlands who flock by the hundreds to hear Isham Lowe and John Semple preach at Ryall Springs. *God in the Straw Pen* is a novel about a revival meeting conducted by two Methodist preachers before the Civil War. But in its human qualities, dealing with privation, the hysteria of sudden release, and the struggle of a young man to find his place in the world, it is universal in appeal and timeless.

Of the persons who come to the camp meeting, the reader is given an intimate view of a few. There is the woman of John Addis, toting the young'uns, who must go to the meeting because it is the largest event that has ever come into her life. There are sick Sam Silton and his wife, who must go because God will appear in the straw pen at the bottom of the rude pulpit, and their daughter Jane, quick with a curiosity about life that has found no satisfaction. There is the blind man at Thorn's, who is brought along so that no one can say the Thorns have not done everything for him that is possible. There are the aristocrats, who come slumming. And there are three negro slaves, tied together, who are brought because the man driving them wants to see the fun. What if, as a result of the religious hysteria, the blind man wanders off to drown in the river; Jane is seduced in the woods by a ruffian, and the woman of John Addis nearly loses her mind? The word of God has been given the poor sinners in one of the most glorious camp meetings of Isham Lowe's career. In a simple setting, dealing with simple people and simple emotions, Mr. Fort has written a novel of tremendous strength.

The main part of the story occupies but two days. Before they reach Ryall Springs, Lowe tells Semple that could he but help one soul to find itself, he would be repaid for all his work. After the meeting on the first night, Semple finds that soul and releases it from the bondage that held it, but it is not the soul of any of the poor followers of the Methodist leader; it is his own.

MYRA M. WATERMAN

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE, LIFE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN COÖPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF AMERICA

What do the library book-borrowers read? Gossip, of course, as witness some of the new arrivals in this month's "general" score. The good new stories, as the three new titles in the list of novels show. But if they can't get the good new stories they read the good old stories. Chicago's Public Library has had no funds from the treasury of that distressed municipality for so long that it hasn't been able to buy any new books since June, but its librarian reports that the young folk of Chicago have rediscovered Dickens and Thackeray and Scott and the rest of the giants of old and are reading them with as much avidity as their parents and grandparents did.

—F. P. S.

NOVELS

1.	SHADOWS ON THE ROCK	*Willa Cather*	KNOPF
2.	A WHITE BIRD FLYING	*Bess Streeter Aldrich*	APPLETON
3.	THE GOOD EARTH	*Pearl S. Buck*	JOHN DAY
4.	THE TEN COMMANDMENTS*	*Warwick Deeping*	KNOPF
5.	FINCH'S FORTUNE*	*Mazo de la Roche*	LITTLE, BROWN
6.	YEARS OF GRACE	*Margaret Ayer Barnes*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
7.	GRAND HOTEL	*Vicki Baum*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
8.	THE ROAD BACK	*Erich Maria Remarque*	LITTLE, BROWN
9.	BELLE-MÈRE*	*Kathleen Norris*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
10.	SEED	*Charles G. Norris*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
11.	THE BRIDGE OF DESIRE	*Warwick Deeping*	MCBRIDE
12.	FATHER	*"Elizabeth"*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

GENERAL

1.	EDUCATION OF A PRINCESS	*Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia*	VIKING
2.	THE STORY OF SAN MICHELE	*Axel Munthe*	DUTTON
3.	GREEN HELL	*Julian Duguid*	CENTURY
4.	NEW RUSSIA'S PRIMER	*M. Ilin*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
5.	RED BREAD	*Maurice Hindus*	CAPE & SMITH
6.	HUMANITY UPROOTED	*Maurice Hindus*	CAPE & SMITH
7.	MEXICO*	*Stuart Chase*	MACMILLAN
8.	WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND*	*Anonymous*	LIVERIGHT
9.	MIRRORS OF 1932	*Anonymous*	BREWER, WARREN & PUTNAM
10.	THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LINCOLN STEFFENS*	*Lincoln Steffens*	HARCOURT, BRACE
11.	BETTER LEFT UNSAID*	*Daisy, Princess of Pless*	DUTTON
12.	DAWN	*Theodore Dreiser*	LIVERIGHT

* This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score.

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(*Continued from page* 455)

desiderata of tomorrow will be the volumes of those owners today who, eschewing fashion, buy their books and mark their ownership in the time-honoured way. But let us hope that they do not sprawl it over the title-pages. There is a right and a wrong place for inscriptions—just as there is a modest and an immodest way of writing them.

AMERICAN ACQUISITIONS

This is just to note that the important Burrell collection of Wagneriana, bought in England a year ago, has been acquired by Mrs. Mary Louise Curtis Bok, widow of the famous editor, and president of the Settlement Music School of Philadelphia, for which it is probably destined. Rupert Brooke's library, bought at Sotheby's in July by the Brick Row Book Shop, Incorporated, has been acquired by the Dartmouth College Library. And Sir James Barrie's manuscript of *The Little Minister* (secured by Mr. Gabriel Wells from Major Hartley Clark) having been found to be lacking 80 pages, the author has rewritten the missing portion for Mr. Wells. The Burrell collection of Wagneriana, including about 100 letters from the composer to his first wife, Minna Planer, is a very notable acquisition. The Brick Row Book Shop, Incorporated, is to be congratulated on having passed on the Rupert Brooke library intact, instead of breaking it up. The Barrie episode reveals a certain amount of mystery of which we shall certainly hear more, for there is another manuscript of *The Little Minister* in existence—the one sold at the Red Cross sale in April 1918. Major Hartley Clark says that Mr. Wells's manuscript is the original and is the one used by the printer. Sir James Barrie had forgotten that there were two, so long ago is it since he wrote the book. He suggests that one of the manuscripts is a rough draft. It appears that it took the author six weeks to rewrite the 80 pages for Mr. Wells, which gives that manuscript an added interest. But what will happen if and when the missing chunk of copy turns up—if it was not used for ammunition by a printer's devil!

The Demand for First Editions

Our table of average weekly demands in England for the "Firsts" of modern authors (on behalf of both American and English collectors) shows some interesting variations compared with those for the last few months. A feature is the demand for Robert Louis Stevenson's original editions, although it should be observed that, unlike the returns for the other authors, it came from two or three quarters only. The figures, which are for four weeks, are derived from various sources. Other authors whose "Firsts" were in considerable request, although not qualifying for inclusion, were: Mark Twain, Bernard Shaw, Lord Byron, John Galsworthy, Thomas Hardy, Leigh Hunt, and Mrs. Craik. The usual reservation is made that the table is only of indicative value:

Kate Greenaway	17
R. L. Stevenson	16
Sir Rider Haggard	15
Anthony Trollope	12
Hugh Walpole	12
Sir Conan Doyle	10
Rudyard Kipling	10
D. H. Lawrence	9
Somerset Maugham	9
William Wordsworth	9
J. B. Priestley	8
Algernon Swinburne	8
John Addington Symonds	8

X. Y. Z.

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Books and MSS in the London Sale-rooms

The winter sale season will be fairly started by the time these Notes are, *inter alia*, flung on the tender at Manhattan. Both in New York and London there will be much curiosity, and some anxiety, to see the effect of the world-wide economic depression and its consequences. For it is not only a question of prices but of the character of the collections passing through the rooms. Here I can only deal with the two opening sales at Hodgson's; and although it is too early to express an opinion, there were now and then prices recorded which suggested a healthier and livelier spirit among both collectors and booksellers. But one sale does not make a season! Anyway, I have one other point to make in these opening lines: it is that after this month cognizance will be taken in these Notes of American sales.

At Hodgson's then (at the end of October) there was keen competition for a manuscript diary by Wilkie Collins—a small 8vo—containing details of *No Thoroughfare*, in which he collaborated with Dickens, and *The Moonstone*; and it was acquired for £21.10. The more famous collaborator was not very well represented on this occasion; but a First Issue of the First Edition of his *A Tale of Two Cities*, having page 213 misnumbered 113, the 8 parts in 7 with adverts (part 3 missing) sold for £39. Other modern Author "Firsts" resulted as follows: for Trollope's *La Vendée* (1st Issue, with the leaf of adverts, but without the 16 pp. catalogue; orig. bds: 1850), £36; Hudson's *Birds and Man* (with A.L.s inserted: 1901), £2.15; R. L. Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey* (with advert leaf before the half-title: 1879), £16; Tennyson's *The Princess* (with A.L.s from the poet inserted: 1847), £4.4; Aldous Huxley's *The Burning Wheel* (orig. yellow wrap-

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